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Straw admits softening policy

Labour drops independent schools threat

By JOHN O'LEARY, EDUCATION CORRESPONDENT

LABOUR has removed a key threat to the future of independent schools by softening its line over their charitable status.

The party had said charitable status would be withdrawn if schools did not share their facilities with local people and state schools. However, Jack Straw, the education spokesman, admitted yesterday that the plan had been dropped and no mention was made of it in the election manifesto last Wednesday.

The schools claimed that fees would have to rise by up to 30 per cent if charitable status was removed. More than 1,000 schools are registered as charities, and many were expected to close if their status was changed.

Mr Straw said: "This is an extremely complex area. It was never our intention to withdraw charitable status from all independent schools, but there was a great danger

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of anything we might say being taken to suggest that. We had proposed tougher tests of charitable status, but they were intended to be ones which most schools could pass. I now think I can achieve what we want through discussions with the schools."

The scheme had been the cornerstone of Labour's policy on private schools for several years. The party wanted independent schools to demonstrate that they were fulfilling their own charitable aims, and were contributing to their local educational provision, as a condition of tax relief. Labour will now rely on the Charities Act, which had to be rushed through Parliament when the general election was called, to provide greater accountability.

David Woodhead, chief executive of the Independent Schools Information Service (ISIS), said: "A few years ago Labour clearly wanted to stop independent schools having charitable status, whatever they did with it, but we have had much closer contact in the last four years. We would be very happy to enter into discussions on community use of our facilities. A great many schools are involved in that way already."

Lawyers told ISIS last year that Labour might fall foul of the European Convention on Human Rights if it removed the schools' charitable status. At the same time, a survey of independent schools found that the £41 million they received in business rate concessions and tax relief was more than matched by bursaries and scholarships worth £54 million.

Mr Straw gave details of Labour's softer approach to the national committee of the Headmasters' Conference last week. Vivian Anthony, the conference secretary, said: "We have always maintained that it was exceptional for schools not to fulfil the functions for which they were founded, but we were pleased with the change. What we still have to get over is that if our charitable function is to look after the poor scholars who appear in so many of our foundation deeds, that is precisely why we need the assisted places scheme."

Labour remains committed to the abolition of that plan, which provides £67 million to subsidise pupils from low-income families at independent schools. The party also intends to make independent schools follow the national curriculum and to place them under the aegis of an education standards commission.

Although one threat to independent education has lifted, the recession is hitting many schools. Cheltenham College has been forced to cut a dozen jobs because parents are failing to pay fees of between £7,875 and £10,425 a year. Parents are now believed to owe the school about £240,000 and it will lose eight teaching posts as the uncertainty over pupil numbers and the unpaid fee bill grows.

Mr Anthony said that Cheltenham's problems were common. "Schools have always had problems with unpaid fees, but when money is tight they get worse. This recession has been especially hard on the groups who provide many of our pupils."

ISIS said that applications for help with fees doubled to 1,000 last year and boarding schools were worst hit, with pupil numbers falling by 4 per cent.

Peter Wilkes, Cheltenham's headmaster, said yesterday: "We are facing a problem of bad debts for the first time in our history. It is a very hard-headed headmaster who sends a boy away at the start of term... but the time has come when I may have to."

Mr Wilkes said he expected unpaid fees to drop well below £240,000 by the end of the school year, but he refused to say how much the governors were trying to save.

Saddam bows to UN demands

FROM JAMES BONE IN NEW YORK

IRAQ has agreed to a United Nations demand to destroy equipment used for making Scud missiles.

Baghdad, which has been facing the threat of new military action and continuing sanctions, has also provided information about a "considerable number" of previously undeclared ballistic missiles and chemical weapons. A UN team due to go to Iraq today will supervise the destruction before the end of the month.

The Iraqi government has also promised to make a comprehensive final disclosure of its weapons of mass destruction by the middle of April. "It's a change in direction,"

said Rolf Ekens, head of the UN special commission charged with dismantling Iraq under the terms of the Gulf war ceasefire, "but it's not the end of the road."

Earlier in Washington, General Colin Powell, the chairman of the UN Joint Chiefs of Staff, told the Senate armed services committee that US forces were ready to strike to force President Saddam Hussein to comply with the UN resolutions requiring him to destroy all weapons of mass destruction.

The UN received evidence of Iraq's new willingness to co-operate on Thursday, Mr Ekens said. He said Abdul

Amir al-Anbari, the Iraqi ambassador, had delivered a letter in which the Baghdad government finally agreed to accept the destruction of Scud-making equipment it had previously argued should be converted to civilian use. Western diplomats say the real test will be Iraq's willingness to demolish buildings at its nuclear weapons facility at Al Atheer, 40 miles south of Baghdad.

Iraq did not say its latest disclosure of weapons was complete, but Iraqi officials have told the UN they are compiling a comprehensive dossier which should be ready about mid-April.

not salted away anything. They say I have £500,000. Those are lies. I haven't anything."

In court, the counsel for Robson Rhodes, the pension fund's provisional liquidator, said that Mrs Maxwell had provided the money "at the drop of a hat", and that many Maxwell pensioners by contrast faced a "bleak and uncertain" future. Robson has already revealed that £458 million of the pension funds is missing, almost two-thirds of the total.

The liquidator said it will now pursue an action against Kevin Maxwell for costs incurred in a Court of Appeal hearing earlier this year, in which Mr Maxwell unsuccessfully tried to claim a right of silence against questions from the liquidators to avoid self-incrimination.

In a written statement to the court, the Maxwell brothers revealed that on December 11, Kevin asked his mother

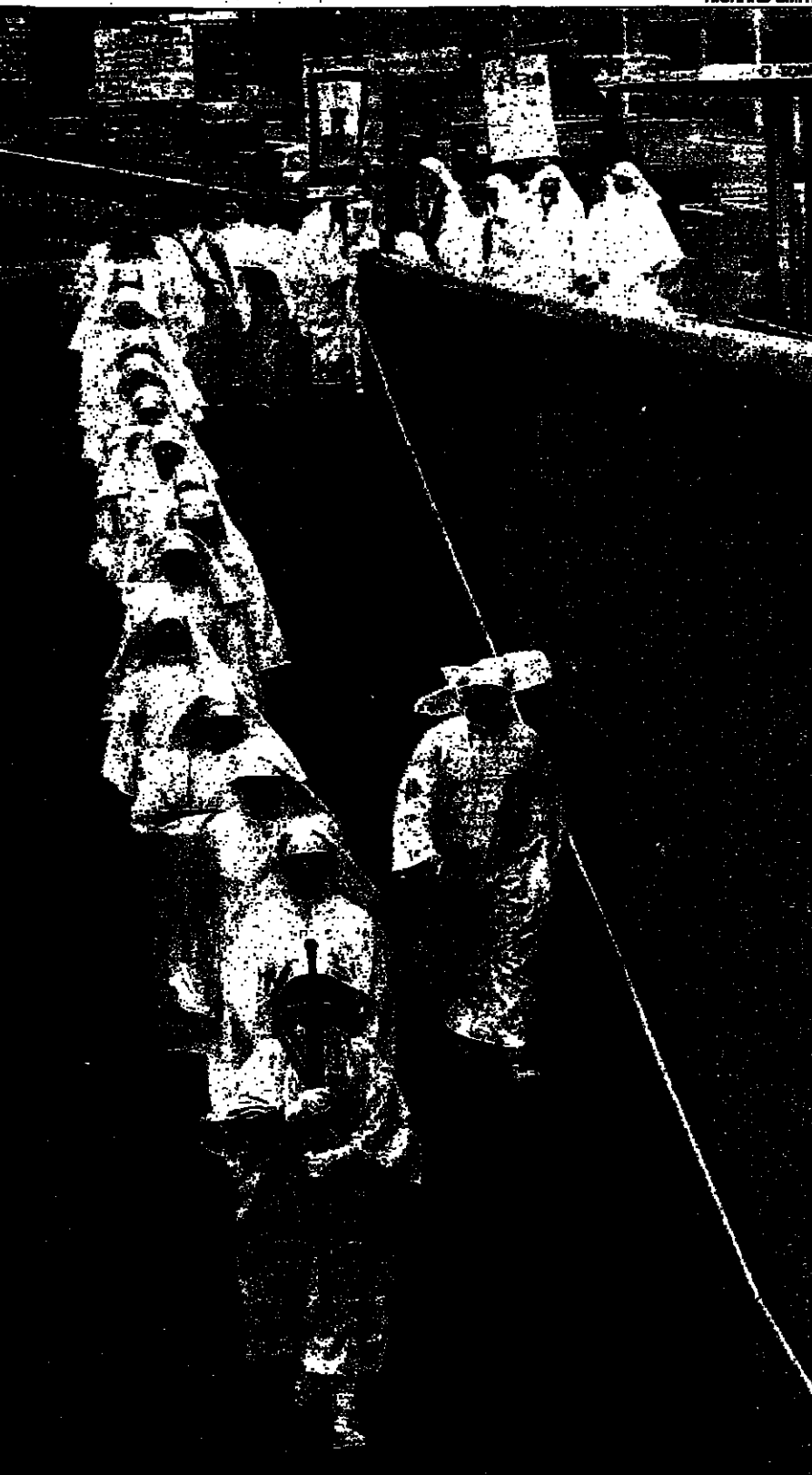
for £100,000 to cover legal fees, which she provided. Soon afterwards she gave her sons another £400,000 each.

Kevin Maxwell has been unable to fund his legal costs since Robson won a court order freezing all his bank accounts, apart from £1,500 a week for living expenses.

In spite of this, the two brothers have hired some of the best — and most expensive — legal advice available. Kevin Maxwell is being represented by Peters & Peters, the leading law firm, and at times has been represented by three senior QCs — George Carman, Gavin Lightman and R Alan Jones.

Later Neil Cooper, the liquidator from Robson, said that he would make a claim for costs against Kevin Maxwell. "We would have failed in our duty to the pensioners if we had not pursued this claim," he said.

Legal action, page 19



Summer's hopeful heralds: a column of robed and optimistic Druids advances down an underpass near the Tower of London yesterday on the way to a ceremonial site for a celebration of the vernal equinox

Major sets zero inflation as new target for Tories

By ROBIN OAKLEY AND PHILIP WEBSTER

AS THE latest inflation figures remained unchanged at 4.1 per cent, taking Britain's rate below Germany's for the first time since 1967, John Major last night set a target of zero inflation.

An increase in petrol prices, and the end to new-year price discounts, pushed the retail price index up 0.5 per cent last month to 136.3, the biggest monthly rise since the VAT-driven surge last April. The annual rise last month was unchanged from January

at 4.1 per cent, the lowest since last October. The prime minister staked his appeal for re-election on a low tax and stable prices economy. Neil Kinnock, the Labour leader, called the latest figures a disappointment and Paddy Ashdown, for the Liberal Democrats, said that the economy had been stopped in its tracks.

Mr Major said at his adoption meeting in Huntingdon last night: "Low inflation is not enough for us. I want an end to inflation. The target I am setting for Britain is stable prices — pay packets and pensions that keep their value. No other party will set that target; no other party cares so much. It is the only long-term way to proper peace of mind for the pensioner and to permanent jobs."

Earlier Mr Major said: "We are securely in pursuit of stable prices, for the first time in many years."

Mr Kinnock accused the government of suppressing inflation by depressing the economy. "These figures must be a grave disappointment for the government," he said. "A high price had been paid in unemployment, in bankruptcies and in repossessions."

Mr Ashdown said on Mersey: "What Britain needs now is not a government who can occasionally hit low inflation by stopping the economy

dead in its tracks, what we need is a government with the policy to have a sustained programme in the long term for low inflation."

The City was slightly disappointed, as many forecasters had predicted that inflation would fall to 4 per cent or below. John Smith, the shadow chancellor, said that the figures were "very disappointing", and added: "John Major's policies are hurting — but not working."

Britain is now under the European average rate of 4.6 per cent, but still well short of a number of countries including France where price increases are running at between 2 and 3 per cent. Germany, however, is facing increasing inflation difficulties as the cost of unification erodes its price stability.

Mr Major used his adoption speech for a further attack on Labour's tax plans. He said that the election was about the debate over lower tax and lower inflation, which was his aim. "It is about the kind of Britain that we want. Low tax opens doors, widens choice, creates opportunity and extends ownership. High tax slams shut the doors on the hopes that are common to all." The Tories will this

Continued on page 18, col 3

Queen's press secretary apologises to duchess

The announcement of the impending royal legal separation has blown up like a firework in the face of Buckingham Palace, Alan Hamilton reports

The battle for hearts and minds over the impending legal separation of the Duke and Duchess of York took erratic flight yesterday, like a faulty firework which did not follow its intended trajectory. Having lit the touch paper, Buckingham Palace was obliged to retreat when the squib blew up in its face.

In a rare prostration Charles Anson, the Queen's press secretary, was obliged to offer a public apology after most of the tabloid press reported the separation plans from the point of view that the duchess had been frozen out by her royal mother-in-law, and had been virtually consigned to the outer darkness as an unpersuaded. There were even suggestions of sympathy for the duchess, which was probably not the palace's intention.

Briefing journalists on Thursday, Mr Anson made some off-the-record observations about the duchess's unsuitability for royal life, observations duly reported within the hour on BBC Radio's *The World At One*.

In a personal statement to the Press Association yesterday Mr Anson said: "Yesterday I gave to the media a short statement concerning the marriage of the Duke and Duchess of York in terms authorised by the Queen. It was that statement alone, and factual answers to questions as to future arrangements, that were authorised by Her Majesty. As head of the Buckingham Palace press office, I accept full responsibility for anything said beyond that, and I very much regret that what was said should have been interpreted by the media to the detriment of the Duchess of York, to whom I have offered my personal apologies."

He added: "I have also apologised to the Queen, and both Her Majesty and Her Royal Highness have been kind enough to accept these."

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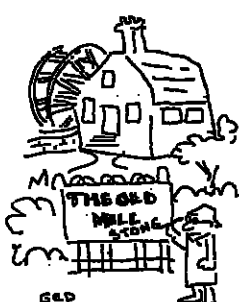
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FELINE FANTASY



Bernard Levin gives heart and home to countless cats, but never hears one purr
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FESTIVE SEASON



Te Kanawa in Seville, Rattle in Berlin — it's Europe's artistic summer
Weekend Times
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Dog lover drowns

A woman drowned trying to save her dog from the sea at Blackpool — the seventh person to die attempting to rescue pets at the same spot. A plaque there commemorates three police officers who were killed in a vain attempt to pull another dog owner from the water in 1985. In each case, the animal struggled to safety. Page 3

Coastal clutter

Almost half of Britain's coastline is polluted by plastic bottles, drink cans, glass, syringes and other detritus. The litter, thought to have been dumped from ships, is blamed for the deaths of more than 60 dolphins. Page 2

Twin track

British Rail is planning a two-track Channel tunnel link rather than the four tracks that might have encouraged freight companies to switch from road to rail. Page 2

Li challenge

The Chinese power struggle intensified when the prime minister, Li Peng, coupled a call for economic change with a warning against the spread of Western ideas. He had been expected to come out more firmly in line with Deng Xiaoping, who has challenged hardliners head on in a quest for 100 years of reform. Page 12

Protest vote

France's ruling Socialists are likely to be dealt a devastating blow in tomorrow's regional elections, partly because of the traditional protest vote that follows years of government and partly because of a mismanaged campaign that has concentrated on the overestimated threat of Jean Marie Le Pen's National Front. Page 13

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1X

Maxwell's widow gives sons £900,000

By NEIL BENNETT
BANKING CORRESPONDENT

ELISABETH Maxwell, the widow of Robert Maxwell, has been named as the mystery benefactor who has given her two sons £900,000 to cover their mounting legal bills. The disclosure came at a Court of Appeal hearing at which the liquidators of the Maxwell pension funds tried and failed to recover up to £100,000 in costs from her for earlier legal actions.

Until now the identity of the backer for Kevin and Ian Maxwell's legal actions has been kept secret and has been the object of considerable speculation. Most observers had discounted Mrs Maxwell as a possible benefactor due to her repeated claims that she is penniless. "I am in great financial difficulty," Mrs Maxwell said in an interview with *Vanity Fair*, the American magazine. "They have stopped my pension, I have



Maxwell claims that she has no money

Barbados..!

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2 HOME NEWS

Researchers unravel family secrets of Egyptian mummies

SCIENTISTS at Manchester Museum are using fragments of tissue from six Egyptian mummies to try to work out how each person was related and how they died. The mummies, found in 1989, appear to be three generations of one family buried side by side in a tomb on the west bank of the Nile 4,200 years ago.

So unusual was the find, made by a team led by the Australian Egyptologist Neguib Kanawati, that the mummies were left in place while a team was assembled to study them. They appear to be grandparents, a son and daughter-in-law and two children, aged about ten to 12. Egyptian and British experts, including members of the mummy team from the Manchester Museum, examined them for the first time in January

Tissue fragments may reveal vital clues to scientists about how six Egyptians lived and died over 4,000 years ago, reports Nigel Hawkes

and took tissue samples for DNA research.

Using endoscopes — rigid tubes that were inserted through the bandages wrapping each mummy — they took samples of five of flesh and one of bone for the DNA analysis, which is being carried out at St Mary's hospital, Manchester. Because the mummies have never been unwrapped they cannot be contaminated, a great advantage, according to Dr Rosalie David of the Manchester Museum, that should make the DNA studies easier.

The mummies were found at Al-

Hagarsa, 250 miles south of Cairo, and are particularly interesting because they are so old. Only four other mummies are known to have survived intact from the same period of Egyptian history, the eighth dynasty of the Old Kingdom, a time of chaos and civil war that ended in 2134 BC.

Nasry Iskander, keeper of the royal mummy collection in Cairo's Egyptian Museum, said that each mummy lay in a heavy wooden coffin with hieroglyphic inscriptions etched on the outside. The adults' faces and shoulders were covered with painted plaster

masks, common for high officials of the day. The children were in adult coffins.

Dr Kanawati said: "The whole thing is fascinating. Were they killed in warfare or a local skirmish? Did they die from disease? We don't know." The mummy believed to be the grandfather has a beard, signifying status. Dr Kanawati believes that the weapons buried with him, including a spear and arrows, indicate that he could have been a provincial military governor.

One of the first questions to be answered by the DNA analysis is the sex of the mummies. Dr David says that it is possible the two children were put in the wrong coffins, since the one in the coffin bearing a male inscription is wearing a female mask. The



Family find: one of the six mummies discovered side by side

samples should also show family relationships, if any, and the presence of disease — previous mummies studied had suffered from worm infestations. The kind of

results that are possible is shown by the team's investigation of the mummy from the Leeds City Museum.

That was Natscf-Amun, a priest

from the temple at Karnak, who lived at about 1100 BC. Using methods including radiology and endoscopy, the team has established that Amin suffered from a parasitic disease, filariasis, and also showed signs of furring of the leg arteries, which could have led to a heart attack or stroke.

The eyes were preserved, which is very unusual in mummies, and study of the nerves supplying the eye muscles showed signs of peripheral neuritis, a disease that can occur with diabetes. The team also found evidence that the priest could have died by strangulation, or possibly by an insect bite on the tongue. Dr David says that she expects the results of the sex tests of the Al-Hagarsa mummies in a few weeks and the rest by the end of the summer.

Coach company to lease carriages on BR night trains

By MICHAEL DYNES TRANSPORT CORRESPONDENT

PRIVATISATION of the rail network, albeit only a tiny part of it, will come a step closer in May when InterCity begins leasing four carriages to a coach company whose chairman is convinced that he can make money from an overnight seated service that rail managers have decided to abandon.

In a joint venture between British Rail and Stagecoach Holdings, a Perth transport company, passengers travelling between Aberdeen, Dundee, Edinburgh and London will be able to buy a ticket from a coach company which enables them to ride on a train. In exchange for an

undisclosed fee, the agreement grants Stagecoach Holdings the right to sell 240 seats on two overnight services between Aberdeen and London, a market from which BR has decided to withdraw and provide only sleeper cars in an effort to reduce costs.

The deal is the first example of government attempts to abolish BR's monopoly provision of passenger and freight services by allowing private sector companies access to the rail network. If successful, the initiative could lead to the proliferation of private sector companies marketing bits and pieces of BR. The scheme

is the brainchild of Brian Souter, the chairman of Stagecoach Holdings, who forecasts that his company will be able to offer passengers standard, single, and return fares between 20 and 30 per cent less than those currently on offer from BR. In contrast to BR rail tickets, the Stagecoach tickets will also include a hot meal, and passengers will be looked after by the company's own uniformed staff.

Stagecoach Holdings intend to market the long-distance service throughout the Highlands and eastern Scotland where it already operates a network of local services. The company is confident that there are already enough people using the overnight train to make the business viable, and is convinced that improved marketing will generate the additional demand needed.

Mr Souter, who founded Stagecoach Holdings with his sister Ann in 1980, has watched the company grow out of all recognition from its humble origins. Armed with £25,000 capital, much of which came from his father's redundancy pay, the family went into the transport business with two coaches.

The introduction of new services between Scotland and London, and Aberdeen, Edinburgh, and Glasgow, where none existed before, proved to be a success. The company now owns 2,400 buses and coaches in Britain and 700 overseas, and has an annual turnover of £160 million and operating profits of £13 million, thanks largely to the deregulation and privatisation of the bus and coach industry.

The company pulled out of the long-distance coach market in 1989 after finding that increased congestion was made the business less profitable. Mr Souter was convinced, however, that the train was the answer to motorway snarl-ups. "We started in 1980 with two coaches," Mr Souter said. "We are starting again with four railway carriages in 1992."

Two-track tunnel link likely to upset campaign

By OUR TRANSPORT CORRESPONDENT

BRITISH Rail, in a move that will disappoint supporters of a wholesale transfer of freight from road to rail, is developing proposals that limit a Channel tunnel rail link to two tracks.

The proposals for a link able to carry international passengers and freight between Folkestone and King's Cross station via Stratford in east London will disappoint advocates of a four-track line as part of a long-term strategy to make the link a way of cutting road traffic congestion.

A four-track railway, made up of two lines for passengers and two lines for freight, would add £2 billion to the cost of the proposed two-track rail link, currently estimated at £4.5 billion. In addition, while a four-track link could carry much more freight than a two-track link, analysts are convinced that demand would not justify spending the additional £2 billion.

BR's planning assumption has, however, enabled rail engineers to press ahead with development of the rail link, which had given every indication of being stuck in limbo after the government's decision last October to abandon the proposed southerly approach to London in favour of a new easterly approach.

Although a final decision on whether to proceed with a two-track or four-track railway will not be taken by ministers until after the election, BR's planning assumption is the first indication that Britain's high-speed mainline connection to the continent will be two-track.

Support for the two-track solution appears to be gaining support from the Conservative and Labour parties. Eurotunnel, and many of the local authorities affected by the route. Ministers are expected to make a final decision about the freight issue after consultations with the Channel tunnel rail link forum, set up in January by Roger Freeman, the transport minister.

Under John Pridaoux, the former InterCity managing

director who is now managing director of New Ventures, the BR department responsible for overseeing development of the link, planners are understood to be working on proposals that could transform the transport network of south Essex and east Kent.

Proposals known to be under consideration include schemes to connect the four Medway towns, Rochester, Chatham, Gillingham, and Strood, to the rail link by means of new stations or spur lines, together with a scheme to connect the rail link to the proposed £1.5 billion Cross-rail project that will run between Liverpool Street and Paddington in London. Plans to assist the development of the East Thames corridor, from East London to the North Sea, are also being examined.

The rail link team is confident that it will have completed its proposal for the easterly approach, including options and variations, by autumn.

Survey finds more litter on beaches

By LOUISE HIDALGO

BRITISH beaches are littered with more plastic bottles, drink cans and sanitary materials than they were two years ago, according to a survey. Almost half of the 1,244 miles of coastline covered by the survey were classified as polluted.

The study, Coastwatch UK, found syringes, glass, polystyrene containers and discarded nylon netting, thought to be responsible for killing more than 60 dolphins off the Cornish coast recently, were as common now as in 1989 in spite of government assurances that EC directives on the cleanliness of bathing water would be met by 1995.

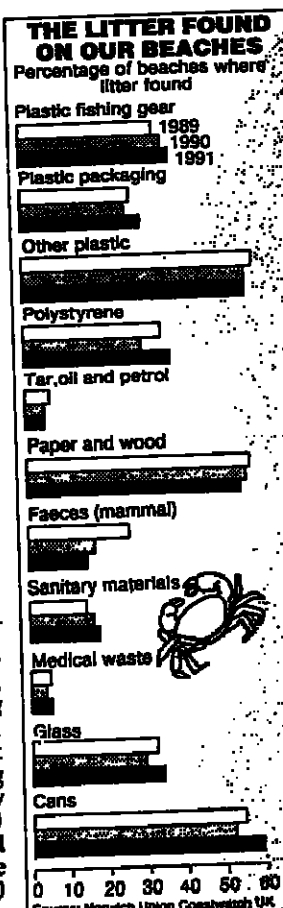
Gareth Rees, who co-ordinated the survey, part of an EC-funded annual study of cleanliness on beaches in 16 European countries, said

the results suggested that ships were still dumping garbage at sea in contravention of international and government restrictions introduced two years ago. Some 70 per cent of beach litter is estimated to come from ships and boats.

"We were very disappointed not to find more improvements in the state of our beaches since our first study three years ago," Dr Rees said. "It is a mixture of people not abiding by the legislation and a failure to implement it."

More than 6,000 volunteers, including school children and college students, were involved in collecting the findings, combing 1,244 miles of beaches, 15 per cent of the British total, during two weeks last autumn. They collected almost 100,000 plastic bottles and aluminium cans, and in some areas found as many as 80 every half mile. Mid-Glamorgan came out as the most polluted section of coast, with 83 plastic bottles, 79 cans and 45 plastic packing straps found per half-mile.

The study, organised by Farnborough College of Technology and the Marine Conservation Society, and which presents itself as no more than a snapshot of the cleanliness of Britain's coast, classifies 560 miles of beach as being polluted, 560 as



moderately polluted and 124 miles as excellent. Polluted beaches were those where a large amount of litter, medical waste such as syringes and inhalers, sewage material and inflows, many of them polluted with scums, oil and debris, were found. One comforting finding was that only 32 oiled birds were discovered compared to 49 in 1990.

Second Briton prepares for space

A technological hitch prevented a Cambridge graduate from making space history, reports Nick Nuttall

AT ABOUT 10.30am on Monday a forgotten British spaceman will clamber aboard the US space shuttle Columbia for a nine-day mission into space and a modest place in the history books.

The mission will make Michael Foale, a Cambridge first class honours graduate who was born in Louth, Lincolnshire, in 1957, the second Briton to have been in space and the first British man. Indeed, if US space shuttle technology had been more reliable or as reliable as the Soviet Union's, Dr Foale, the son of a retired RAF air commodore, would have been the nation's first spaceman.

The seven-man mission on which he is embarking was scheduled to launch last year, a few weeks before the Anglo-Soviet Juno mission that put Helen Sharman into orbit on the Mir space station, making her the first Briton in space.

The shuttle programme has been dogged with difficulties, including cracks in the doors of the external fuel tanks and the tragic Challenger disaster in 1986 when the craft exploded minutes after launch, killing its crew, which led to flights being delayed by about a year.

Yesterday Dr Foale, who attended Kings School, Canterbury, flew to Cape Canaveral, Florida, from the Johnson Space Centre in Houston for final launch preparations and health checks while his family and friends gathered at Cocoa Beach, the town near the space complex.

His wife, Rhonda, aged 33, a space engineer at Johnson working on the planned space station Freedom, said yesterday: "It is very exciting. Mike has wanted to be an astronaut since he was six. He has geared his whole life to this moment."

She was aware of the risks her husband was taking but that "you have to keep the danger in perspective". She said: "It is not as if he is



Space bound: Michael Foale wanted to be an astronaut since he was six

going to war." Mrs Foale described her husband as meticulous in his work and an avid wind surfer and said he had not been disappointed by being picked into space by Miss Sharman. "He was very happy about Juno and just pleased that another Briton was going into space," she said.

Mrs Foale, who will be leaving their three-month-old daughter Jenna at home, said what her husband miss-

ed most about Britain, which he left in 1982 to pursue a career with NASA, was the intellectual community at Cambridge, where he obtained a PhD in laboratory astrophysics in 1982 from Queens' College.

"Luckily we have a TV channel here that plays a lot of British shows. We have watched all the Dr Who's and 'Elio' Elio every Thursday," she said.

The mission, scheduled to

blast off at 8.01 Eastern Standard Time (13.01 GMT) will be the first in a series of 12 designed to study the full 11-year solar cycle using the Atmospheric Laboratory for Applications in Science (Atlas).

The instrument, made by 12 nations, will study solar flares and other phenomena on the sun's surface that fire charged particles into space and which play a role in the earth's weather systems.

Heads are told to keep quiet

By MATTHEW D'ANCONA EDUCATION REPORTER

HEAD teachers in Wandsworth, southwest London, have been told not to talk to parents and the press about the financial difficulties facing the borough's primary schools and to keep out of party political debate.

Donald Naismith, Wandsworth's director of education, said in a letter to head teachers that rational discussion was required rather than "damaging, alarmist and misleading publicity". He said teachers who violated the council publicity code risked disciplinary and legal action.

Seventy of the borough's head teachers claim that budget cuts will lead to hundreds of redundancies, and have written to parents outlining their concern. The group believes the schools need £7 million to make up the shortfall, but the council insists that there is enough money to maintain standards. It has, however, returned £1 million to the budget in response to the recent anxieties.

Dick Cooper, head of Honeywell junior school, said yesterday that he had been reprimanded by Mr Naismith. "It's quite outrageous to suggest that we should not talk to parents at the time of the parent's charter."

Covent Garden faces £2m loss

By SIMON TAIT, ARTS CORRESPONDENT

THE Royal Opera House, which had hoped to make a small profit this year, expects instead to be facing a loss of £2 million for the financial year which ends next month. The accumulated deficit will be more than £3 million, Jeremy Isaacs, general director, said yesterday.

Details are to be announced next month, but the reverse will be a bitter blow to the opera house which has been battling against deficit for four years, and had to increase the cost of tickets to a top price of £128.

The unexpected loss results from poor ticket sales. "What happened was that the bottom began to fall out of the box office last March," Mr Isaacs said. Last season Covent Garden was enjoying 90 per cent capacity at performances, which enabled it to break even but the figure is now down to 80 per cent. New productions in the present season have not been as well received as had been hoped.

The opera house has commissioned a consultant to carry out a six-month examination of costs and operations to try to reinforce claims for a large increase in its grant from the Arts Council.

Mr Isaacs said: "We have for many years been trying to

persuade the Arts Council that we deserve a higher allocation that they have given us. The council is proceeding with its own series of routine assessments of our three companies, but they thought that a separate examination would be a good idea." Ian Beesley, of Price Waterhouse, will report on his findings in September.

Covent Garden is the biggest single client of the Arts Council from which the Royal Opera, Royal Ballet and Birmingham Royal Ballet are to get almost £19 million for 1992-93, 6½ per cent more than in the current year.

The Arts Council has already carried out an assessment of the Royal Ballet, which resulted in a £500,000 enhancement grant last year. An assessment of the Royal Opera is now under way.

In contrast, English National Opera has been enjoying a successful season which should see a small surplus, although not enough to cancel its own accumulated deficit of over £1 million. This week the government made a special grant of £10.8 million through the Arts Council to enable ENO to buy its home, the London Coliseum. The rest of the price of £12.8 million is being granted by the Foundation for Sport and the Arts.

Rebel vicar becomes a bishop

A vicar who led his congregation out of the Church of England after the decision to ordain women deacons nine years ago is to become a bishop in the breakaway Anglican Catholic Church (Ruth Gledhill writes).

The Rev Leslie Hamlett could begin ordaining priests in his new missionary diocese of England and Wales after his consecration in June. He said his church was not part of the protest movement against women priests but was concerned about "the whole issue of the faith. The Anglican heritage, which is the total history of the holy Catholic Church in our land, is no longer fully upheld by the Church of England."

Father Hamlett and most of his congregation at Alasgers Bank, Staffordshire, left the Church of England in 1983. He was elected a bishop in the continuing Anglican Catholic Church when its primate, the Most Rev William Lewis, of Georgia, USA, visited his parish last week.

Fr Hamlett said the Church — which has 15 bishops and 500 parishes worldwide — had about 300 adherents in Gloucestershire, Shropshire, Wiltshire, Staffordshire, Lincoln and London.

Wilson inquest told of charge

THE inquest in Preston into the death of David Wilson, the Lancashire accountant killed by gunmen at his home on March 5, was told yesterday that police do not expect an immediate conclusion to the murder investigation.

Detective Superintendent Bob Denmark, who is leading the enquiry, confirmed that a man had been charged with conspiracy to murder and that two others were in custody but had not been charged. The hearing was adjourned. Detectives are liaising with the FBI and police in Europe.

Man killed by car thieves

A man was stabbed to death by two young men whom he confronted as they tried to break into his car early yesterday. There was a scuffle and the men ran off leaving their victim bleeding from his wound.

Neighbours went to help Donald Palmer, aged 52. He was taken to hospital but died an hour after the incident outside his home on the Gloucester Grove estate, in Peckham, southeast London. Police said that the suspects were white and in their late teens or early twenties.

Green returns

Sir Allan Green, QC, who resigned as Director of Public Prosecutions last year, is returning to the criminal Bar. Sir Allan resigned as DPP after being questioned by police about alleged kerb-crawling at King's Cross, London. Sir Allan will be defending, in a trial due to start at Southwark crown court on Monday, a man accused of being involved in a car-ringing racket.

Ex-head jailed

Lionel Mann, aged 65, a former headmaster at Nourse School in Felixstowe, Suffolk, was jailed for three years for sex assaults on pupils between 1977 and 1982. Mann, who is retired, admitted seven assaults and one act of gross indecency.

Pupils expelled

Radley College has expelled ten sixth-form boys who were caught smoking cannabis. Richard Morgan, the warden of the school, near Abingdon, Oxfordshire, said they had all admitted smoking the drug. Mr Morgan took over as head at the public school, which charges fees of £10,350 a year, last September.

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QUEEN ELIZABETH2

Victim is eighth to die at same spot

Woman drowns in struggle to rescue pet dog from sea

By RONALD FAUX AND ADAM FRESKO

A WOMAN drowned yesterday trying to rescue her dog from the sea at Blackpool in a struggle to save the lives of six others, all of whom were trying to save dogs or their owners. A seventh person died after chasing a ball into the water.

In 1983 three police officers were killed when they tried to rescue one of the victims, a Scotsman, who had gone into the water to save his pet. High tide was breaking in strong waves against the sea wall at the time. There is a plaque at the spot where yesterday's incident took place recording the bravery of the two policemen and the police woman.

In March 1985 a holiday-maker was drowned off the same stretch of coastline — between North Pier and Gynn Square — when he went into the sea to retrieve a football.

In 1986 an 11-year-old boy died at the same spot, again jumping in to save his pet dog.

Police said the woman, Barbara Ann Blackburn, aged 49, of Blackpool, had been walking two dogs along the promenade when one of the animals went into the water.

Strong winds and a spring tide made conditions dangerous and after apparently throwing a life belt to the animal the woman was swept into the waves breaking

against the promenade. The dog eventually struggled to safety on its own as the woman's body was recovered by an RNLI inshore vessel. The second dog was found tied by its lead to railings.

Mrs Blackburn made stage clothes for entertainers and ice dancers and was described as one of the country's leading theatrical costumiers. She worked at Blackpool Pleasure Beach where her three daughters, who are all in their twenties, are ice dancers.

An official of the Blackpool beach patrol service said that safety chains were in use yesterday along the promenade and signs warned of the danger from the sea. Lancashire police said that again they had to remind the public to respect the power of the sea after another tragedy.

Roland Derbyshire, of the RNLI at Blackpool, said: "This death toll is going on and on." He spoke of confusion during the search yesterday, caused by reports of more than one person in the water. After the woman had been recovered, the search went on for some time in the belief there was another person in trouble. "This was not the case but we must always err on the side of caution," he said.

The Royal Life Saving Society, which instructs life guards, said: "The event is a horrific reminder of the tragic

multiple drowning in Blackpool in 1985. Dog owners repeatedly put themselves at risk to save their animals but, although this is easier to say than do, they must consider their own lives more important. This is not the first case of a near drowning this year brought about by a dog owner trying to retrieve his pet.

The answer is not to disregard the lives of our pets, but greater awareness of the force of flowing and open water."

Clifford Thompson, managing director at the pleasure beach, said: "This is a family company and we are all deeply touched by this tragedy. Mrs Blackburn was a highly skilled worker who created some of the best designs we have ever had. She will be very difficult to replace." She was known to leading stage and television entertainers.

A helicopter pilot was rescued from heavy seas in Morecambe Bay yesterday after his Bell Jet Ranger crashed with engine trouble on a flight between Blackpool and the Isle of Man.

The pilot was taken from the sea by a helicopter from RAF Valley in north Wales which had earlier been scrambled after the woman was swept into the sea.

The pilot was taken to Victoria hospital, Blackpool, suffering from exposure. He was named as Jeff Dodd of Manchester Helicopter Charters, based at Eccles.

Charities praise patron duchess

By RAY CLANCY

CHARITIES and organisations supported by the Duchess of York were yesterday hopeful that she would remain in contact and continue to carry out some public appearances. Buckingham Palace has so far not banned the duchess from playing a part in public life if she wishes but she will no longer be performing royal duties.

"We are just not clear what it means for us," said Sue Kershaw of the Motor Neurone Disease Association which has the duchess as a patron. "The trustees want her to continue as a leading public figure in the association. I don't think anybody can doubt her personal commitment to our cause."

The Carr Gomm Society for lonely and divorced people said that it had no wish to lose the duchess as a patron. "We would like her to stay," a spokeswoman said. "What role she would play would be completely up to her."

Action Research, a charity for research into childhood diseases which has the duchess as president, said that her position was not being questioned. Noel Nagel, director of the Sports Aid Foundation, of which the duchess is president, said he was shocked by the news. "She is an excellent president who takes a real interest in the work of the foundation, particularly the part of it which involves helping young people and disabled athletes."

The duchess is supportive of a large number of groups many of which are concerned with children and also the arts. She is patron of the Winchester Cathedral Trust and the Christ Church Cathedral restoration appeal. She is also patron of the Dulwich Picture Gallery, the Sick Children's Trust, the Blue Cross, the Chemical Dependency Centre and Opera North.



The Duke of York leaving the London Contemporary Dance Theatre yesterday where he had lunch and spoke about the need for art sponsorship

TV appeal aids hunt for killer

Detectives leading a new investigation into the murder in 1975 of Lesley Molseed, aged 11, yesterday began sifting through hundreds of offers of information after a nationwide television appeal for help in finding two cars (Stewart Tandler writes).

The case was reopened after Stefan Kiszko, convicted for the murder in 1976, was freed by the appeal court last month. Police are looking for the drivers of a Vauxhall Viva and a Morris 1000 seen at an A672 layby on the Sunday afternoon when the girl went missing after leaving her home in Rochdale, Greater Manchester, to go shopping.

Actor accepts libel damages

Graham Stark the comedy actor accepted undisclosed substantial damages in the High Court against *The Sunday Telegraph* over a book review that attacked his personality and questioned his acting ability. The review of Mr Stark's *Remembering Peter Sellers* also suggested that the author was a parasite on Sellers, the court was told. Victoria Shopp, for Mr Stark, aged 70, said the actors, who appeared together in *The Goons*, were close friends who held each other in high regard for over 35 years until Sellers' death.

Art theft alert

Oxford University is planning stringent security measures after a spate of art thefts from the Ashmolean museum and several colleges. Items stolen in the past three years have included Greek vases, paintings and silver. Earlier this month a visitor left Christ Church with a 16th century painting under his coat. Recommendations from a security working party were accepted this week.

Culture snippet

A series of 90-second talks on Rembrandt, dubbed sight-bites, are to be transmitted by BBC2 from tomorrow. The programmes will not appear on schedules and are designed to catch culture-allergic viewers off guard. Presenters on *Talking Rembrandt* — believed to be among the shortest programmes transmitted — will include the Duke of Devonshire and Rolf Harris.

Toilet for sale

A 19th century underground public lavatory comprising ladies' and gents' toilets with their own front doors is for sale for £15,000. The toilet, owned by Tower Hamlets council, is on a traffic island the size of two tennis courts in the middle of Bow Road, east London. The entrance to the gents is under a statue of Gladstone and the ladies' entrance is in the grounds of nearby Bow church.

Murder trial told of planning fight

By RAY CLANCY

ALBERT Dryden threatened a council planning officer minutes before shooting him dead in a confrontation, filmed by television cameras, about a bungalow built without permission, it was claimed in a court yesterday.

"You might not be around to see the outcome of this disaster," Mr Dryden yelled at Harry Collinson, Derwent-side council's senior planning officer, when he arrived to oversee the bungalow's demolition, the court was told.

Mr Dryden, aged 51, of Consett, Co Durham, denies murdering Mr Collinson and attempting to murder Tony Belmont, a BBC television reporter, PC Stephen Campbell and Michael Dunston, a council solicitor, all of whom were allegedly shot at.

Millions of television viewers saw the confrontation, as did onlookers gathered to see the demolition.

Reconstructed excerpts from taped interviews between police and Mr Dryden were played to the jury at Newcastle upon Tyne crown court. When Mr Dryden was asked about his encounter with Mr Collinson, he denied that his words were a threat.

Mr Dryden told police that

he had been referring to his hope that an inspector from the environment department would visit the site as a result of his appeal against the council requiring demolition of his home.

Mr Dryden said that he meant that when the inspector came it would be "quite probable" that another council official, rather than Mr Collinson, would be present.

The jury also heard direct extracts from the tapes. Det. Chief Inspector Arthur Proud said to Mr Dryden: "You haven't even said you have done it." Mr Dryden replied: "Maybe I haven't". After being advised that it was best if he admitted the shooting and gave a reason, he said: "I am prepared to tell my side of the story in court."

Eventually, Mr Dryden admitted owning the revolver used in the shooting, which he said he had bought from a schoolfriend in 1952. He also said: "Well, I believe I did do it, but I don't know why I did it. I suppose I have to admit I did it because you say you have a lot of witnesses."

A search of Mr Dryden's property revealed a number of weapons and quantities of ammunition, the court was told. Malcolm Fletcher, a forensic science firearms expert, said that several of the weapons were not capable of being fired because they were homemade or incomplete modifications.

Mines containing high explosives were found at the property, the court was told. The trial resumes on Monday.

Murder trial told of secret burial

A MURDER trial jury was told yesterday of the moment the dead man's son learnt that his father had been secretly buried in the shallow grave yards from his bedroom window.

The son's account was read out in a statement at Luton crown court where, June Scotland, his mother, denies murdering her 48-year-old husband in 1987. The body remained hidden in the shallow grave for nearly four years after Mrs Scotland and her daughter Caroline told other family members, relatives and friends that her husband had suddenly gone to work in Saudi Arabia.

Alistair Scotland, aged 25, who had been on holiday at the time of the killing at the family's home in Pankhurst Crescent, Stevenage, had believed the story he had been told. But on Easter Sunday last year, Alistair Scotland, a student in Coventry, was visiting the family home during the holidays.

In the statement he said that his mother woke him in his bedroom and said: "I hid him with a rolling pin. I had to do it."

In his second statement, the son said: "He was very strict and what he said was law and no-one was allowed to argue with him." His father "ruled everyone with a rod of iron". He was never loving to anyone and would "slap mum about". He added: "I remember mum saying if it had not been for us children she would not have stayed with him."

Public apology, page 1
Spanish royalists, page 13
Clifford Longley, page 14
Diary, page 14

Uproar engulfs the silent messenger

By ALAN HAMILTON

NOT for the first time in recent Buckingham Palace history Charles Anson, the press secretary to the Queen, has displayed the impossibility of the task with which he is charged. To be official spokesman for an institution that needs to improve its public relations, or wishes to convey a point of view, while at the same time trying to maintain impartiality and a vestige of mystique, is to play in a game where own goals will be as common as positive scores.

Michael Shea, a former palace press secretary, was effectively sent to the Tower (although after a decent interval in the hope that no one would notice) for a deep-throat briefing to *The Sunday Times* that the Queen was less

than happy with Mrs Thatcher's abrasive style of government. In the minds of correspondents who keep a watch on palace matters there is no doubt that Mr Shea in 1986 and Mr Anson this week were accurately conveying the views of their employer. The difficulty is getting the message across without anyone saying where it came from.

Mr Anson was let down on Thursday by Paul Reynolds, the respected diplomatic correspondent of BBC Radio, who was briefed by Mr Anson on the Queen's situation and chose, in the circumstances of a big story, to tell listeners to *The World At One* what he had learned. Had it rested there, not much more would have happened, but the entire tabloid press then set on Mr Reynolds's report and announced that the palace knives were "out for Fergie".

Off-the-record briefings are tricky animals. The serious media value the guidance they provide, but the briefer — and in the case of palace stories there is only one possible source — always runs the risk of correspondents deciding that a story is too important to remain under the wraps of confidentiality. Mr Reynolds is employed by the BBC, not the palace.

Mr Anson, who has held the job since 1990, is well regarded by correspondents for his calm, informative guidance on palace matters. He is more professional and

worldly wise than some who have held the post, having worked his way through the diplomatic service in Washington and Tehran and had a spell in the press office at Downing Street under James Callaghan.

He also lived in the real world as public relations director of the merchant bankers Kleinwort Benson, where one of his tasks was to explain away a fall in profits from £38 million to £9 million in the wake of Black Monday.

The Yorks' separation was Mr Anson's first minefield. Recently he masterminded the public relations surrounding the release of the BBC documentary *Elizabeth R*.

Mr Anson, aged 47, was

educated at Lancing College and Cambridge, is married with two children and is regarded by friends as a mean tennis player.

His appointment followed what his ultimate masters regarded as a series of public relations disasters over the separation of the Princess Royal and Captain Mark Phillips, and the decision of Prince Edward to abandon his Royal Marines training. That he had to issue an apology yesterday is an indication of the perils attendant on being the mouthpiece for an organisation that is not supposed to have a view about anything, ever.

Apology to duchess, page 1



Anson: more worldly wise than some predecessors

Number of ponds halved in ten years

By DOUGLAS BROOM

THE garden pond is Britain's best hope of saving its vanishing aquatic wildlife, according to a survey of more than 600 ponds throughout the country.

Pondwatch, the biggest national survey of its kind, organised by the Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust, found that the number of ponds had halved in the past 100 years. In some areas the loss was even greater.

As farm and village ponds silted up or were built over, ponds in gardens or school grounds were playing an increasingly important role in providing homes for amphibians and insects. Ten per cent of the 627 ponds surveyed from Scotland to Cornwall were home to the Great Crested Newt, an endangered species protected by law, and two thirds had colonies of frogs.

Although three quarters were virtually free of refuse the rest were heavily con-

taminated and urgently needed clearing. The best water quality was in ponds on nature reserves, the poorest in garden ponds.

More than a third were under ten years old, representing "an important contribution to replacing the ponds lost since 1892", the report said. It concluded, however, that the quality of ponds as homes for aquatic

life must be improved urgently if some of the less common animals were to be saved.

Using an index based on the number of small creatures in each pond studied the report said that the level of life in most ponds was low and urged owners to introduce more native plants and to care for their ponds better. Caroline Aistrop, of the

trust, said action was needed urgently as frogs, newts and toads were now returning to ponds to breed.

The first thing is not to put fish into a pond, apart perhaps from sticklebacks," she said. "Carp and goldfish will just eat the insects and the frog spawn. A stickleback is more likely to be eaten by dragonfly larvae."

A thriving wildlife pond would be home to amphibians such as frogs and newts as well as insects from waterboatmen to Dragon damselflies and water spiders. "Especially for children, wildlife ponds provide a chance to watch nature under our very noses."

The survey was published to mark the launch of the £2,500 Pondwatch awards to find the best wildlife pond in Britain. Details of the competition can be obtained from the trust at Slimbridge, Gloucester, GL2 7BT.



Wet and wild: a whirling beetle, a frog and a water spider. All live happily in garden ponds

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THE SUNDAY TIMES

The Crown in crisis

On the morning that the story of the Steve Wyatt photographs was published, the Duchess of York found herself frozen out by the Royal establishment, even by the members of staff — when she went



to her office she was faced with total silence. The duchess also found there was no one to help her. She had seen how Mark Phillips had been gradually eased out of the inner circle and she was not prepared to sit back while it happened to her... Andrew Morton — in *The Sunday Times* tomorrow

Rebel vic becomes a bishop

Wilson inq. told of charge

Man killed car chase

Green rebo

F-head jalle

Pupils exp



The State education system is crumbling through lack of Government investment. The size of classes is growing. Schools are literally falling down. The teaching profession is demoralised. And our children

are less well educated than their European contemporaries.

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Academic libraries

Universities spend 28% less on books

BY MATTHEW D'ANCONA, EDUCATION REPORTER

SPENDING on books fell by 28 per cent in universities and by 50 per cent in polytechnics between 1979 and 1989, according to a new report on the state of academic libraries.

Twenty-two universities and 17 polytechnics reported a decline of more than 40 per cent, and three universities and five polytechnics reported a decline of more than 65 per cent.

The survey by the Council of Academic and Professional Publishers said that the average amount spent on books per university student was £44 in 1989. Twenty-six pounds was spent per polytechnic student, £2 less than the average price of an academic book. Book expenditure varied considerably, from £94 per student at Cambridge University, to £13 at Middlesex Polytechnic.

Spending on periodicals also declined sharply, by 29 per cent in universities and 51 per cent in polytechnics. The London Business School spent £242 per student on periodicals in 1989, compared

with £11 at Birmingham Polytechnic.

John Davies, the council's director, said: "With the expansion of higher education, we shouldn't be in a situation where the libraries are stretched for basic texts. The difficulty has been getting people to take action. The government says it's up to the funding councils and the funding councils say there's not enough money coming in from the government."

Mr Davies said that the government's annual allocation of £3 million to university libraries, earmarked for acquisition, had not arrested the general trend.

A comparison survey comparing student book-buying in 1983 and 1991 said that the number of students buying recommended texts had declined from 92 per cent to 83 per cent, and that 56 per cent of students felt that they lacked adequate funds to buy books. Eighty per cent of university and polytechnic libraries reported that they stocked textbooks because students could not afford to buy them.

Percentage change in expenditure per student 1979-8 to 1989-90 adjusted by RPI

| | | | |
|---------------------------|-------|-------------------|-------|
| Universities | 0.8 | Aberdeen | -40.1 |
| Aston | -32.8 | Dundee | -58.8 |
| Bath | -31.5 | Edinburgh | -14.8 |
| Birmingham | -50.1 | Glasgow | -36.5 |
| Bristol | -44.2 | Heriot-Watt | -14.5 |
| Brunel | -48.6 | St Andrews | -45.7 |
| Cambridge | -4.6 | Stirling | -51.7 |
| Cardiff | -43.5 | Strathclyde | 6.0 |
| City | -36.7 | Queen's, Belfast | -52.2 |
| Durham | -28.9 | Univ of Ulster | -52.0 |
| East Anglia | -3.4 | | |
| Exeter | -55.6 | Polytechnics | |
| Hull | -60.8 | Birmingham | -62.0 |
| Keele | -54.8 | Brighton | -54.4 |
| Kent | -33.7 | Bristol | -41.4 |
| Lancaster | -56.3 | Hatfield | -20.9 |
| Leeds | -6.0 | Huddersfield | 82.9 |
| Leicester | -68.8 | Kingston | -36.8 |
| Liverpool | -26.4 | Coventry | -57.0 |
| LBS | -72.3 | Leicester | -59.7 |
| London | -30.3 | Liverpool | -42.9 |
| Loughborough | -21.8 | City of London | -48.6 |
| MBS | -47.6 | Middlesex | -72.2 |
| Manchester | -17.9 | North East London | -72.9 |
| UMIST | 27.5 | North London | -49.8 |
| Newcastle | 13.8 | Central London | -57.4 |
| Nottingham | -38.1 | South Bank | -57.4 |
| Oxford | -3.0 | Thames | -55.8 |
| Reading | -50.0 | Manchester | -48.9 |
| Salford | -16.9 | Newcastle | -51.1 |
| Sheffield | -31.6 | North Staffs | - |
| Southampton | -38.8 | Oxford | - |
| Surrey | -55.8 | Plymouth | -33.2 |
| Sussex | -18.5 | Portsmouth | -38.5 |
| Warwick | -58.3 | Lancashire | -38.5 |
| York | -11.1 | Sheffield | -70.7 |
| Aberystwyth | -36.7 | Sunderland | -76.4 |
| Bangor | -70.8 | Trent | -38.0 |
| Cardiff | -8.5 | Wales | -78.2 |
| St David's Lampeter | -51.7 | | |
| Swansea | -58.6 | | |
| Univ of Wales Coll of Med | -15.2 | | |

Sources: University Funding Council and Council of Polytechnic Librarians

Drug user list rises to 20,820

The number of notified drug addicts rose by 17 per cent to 20,820 last year, according to Home Office figures published yesterday (Richard Ford writes).

There were a record 8,000 new notifications, which at 16 per cent was a slower rate of increase than in the previous year. The Home Office said that the rise in notifications might be the result of efforts to encourage addicts to seek help because of Aids. Of those registered, 12,800 were renotified addicts, an increase of 2,000 on 1990.

Police decision

The Metropolitan police yesterday said no action is to be taken against officers found by a jury to have assaulted and falsely imprisoned Marie Burke, aged 73, who on Thursday won damages of £50,000 against the force at Croydon county court. It said: "The matter has been investigated by the Complaints Investigation Bureau and no allegations against officers were substantiated."

Eubank charge

The boxer Chris Eubank will be charged with driving without due care and attention, police said. Mr Eubank, aged 25, was released on police bail after an accident last month in which Kevin Lawlor, aged 33, was killed while working at roadworks.

Beach threat

Some of Ireland's most beautiful beaches were last night polluted by thousands of balls of congealed oil. About 100 miles of coast from Co Kerry to Co Mayo have been affected. The oil, split at sea some months ago, is being cleared up and analysed to try to trace its source.



The chough: search is on for nesting sites

Farmers help save rare crow

BY KERRY GILL

ISLAND farmers are being offered money to ensure the survival of the chough, a member of the crow family so rare in Britain that there are fewer of them than golden eagles.

The Nature Conservancy Council for Scotland is paying up to £1,200 to each farmer prepared to leave disused attics, old barns and outhouse roofs with dry, hidden spaces for nesting choughs on the Inner Hebridean islands.

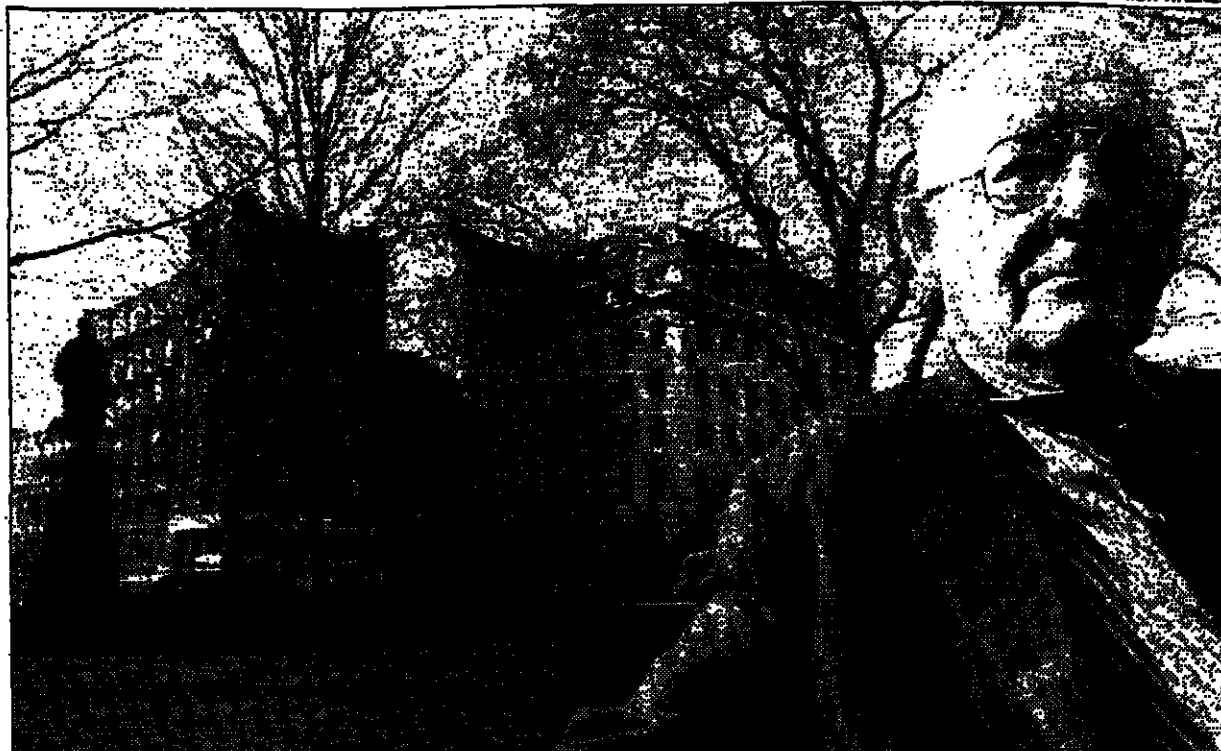
But the chough, distinguished by its glossy black coat and red beak and legs, remains threatened by the gradual disappearance of the cowpat, particularly during the winter months. The cowpat provides the chough with a staple diet of grubs, flies and ticks, which survive on and around the dung as it rots.

Cattle now tend to be taken indoors during the coldest months leaving the chough without its natural diet. For young birds trying to develop their foraging skills, a lack of cowpats can be disastrous.

Choughs are birds of the Celtic fringe. They are still found on islands off the Scottish west coast, Wales, western Ireland, Brittany and the Outer Hebrides. They have, however, disappeared from Cornwall.

Mayfair pits its might against rail link plan

Residents of London's richest "village" have been galvanised into a protest campaign, reports John Young



SIMON WALKER

MOGENS Hauschildt is a determined man. He is a Danish investment analyst who has lived in London "on and off" for 30 years and has spacious offices with a splendid view over Berkeley Square. He is particularly determined to prevent express trains from running under Mayfair.

With Sir Michael Clapham, former chairman of the Confederation of British Industry, Mr Hauschildt has launched a genteel but steadfast campaign to divert from Mayfair British Rail's proposed underground Crossrail scheme between Paddington and Liverpool Street stations.

This week, the Residents' Association of Mayfair, of which Mr Hauschildt is deputy chairman, and Sir Michael is chairman, held a meeting to protest about the noise and disruption that would be inflicted upon London's richest "village" by BR's plans.

Sixty residents and representatives of Mayfair's business community resolved to set up a working party to campaign against the Crossrail route. Mr Hauschildt said: "We

found an awful lot of people were unaware of the scheme. We are going to start a campaign and join forces with a number of other opposing interests along the route. "We are suggesting it go

direct from Paddington to Kings Cross and avoid the centre." Sir Michael, who lives in Hill Street, said that he would not be directly affected by the Crossrail, but several friends lived virtually

above the route and had found that their houses were now unsaleable. A Mayfair residents' association may sound unlikely. It is hard to envisage grantees living near Claridge's,

and who include dukes, entrepreneurs and foreign royalty, holding car boot sales and protest marches.

Mr Hauschildt does not see it that way. The association, he says, has nearly 1,000 members, has existed since 1974, and is recognised by Westminster city council as the voice of the population. At the end of the second world war, about 50,000 people lived in the area bounded by Park Lane, Piccadilly, Regent Street and Oxford Street. The number of households has since shrunk to about 1,800, perhaps 5,000 people.

Mr Hauschildt says one of the association's purposes is to campaign for restoration of local shops and other amenities that will prevent Mayfair becoming like the City of London, mainly deserted outside office hours.

"Despite organisations like the National Trust and all the rest, I think the British have a total contempt for their heritage," he said. He blames the granting of supposedly temporary permits for houses and flats to be used as offices, and what he describes as the greed of landlords seeking to maximise the use of available space at high rents.

Determined campaign: Sir Michael Clapham, residents' association chairman, in Hanover Square

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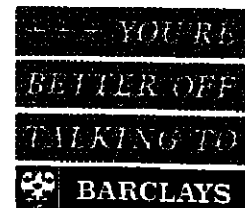
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News and analysis

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Jeering protesters drive Major on to the offensive

By Philip Webster and Robin Oakley

THE party battle sharpened yesterday as the Tories accused Labour of being behind the rowdyism which prevented John Major speaking in Bolton on Thursday. Neil Kinnock said that personal attacks on him by Conservatives were a sign of desperation.

Senior Tories were privately delighted by the Bolton mobbing which they believed had stirred up Mr Major and put new mettle into the Conservative campaign. Norman Tebbit, the former party chairman, urged Mr Major to "let some of his dogs do more barking" and said: "He can't just be Mr Nice Guy".

Senior Conservatives, who had intended to keep Mr Major above the rougher exchanges during the campaign, now concede that he may have to engage in more hand-to-hand combat than they had intended. But they were relieved to find him cheered by the prospect.

Tory officials claimed yesterday that they had been told before Mr Major ever got to

Bolton that Labour had prepared a rowdy reception. Mr Major told his London press conference: "What we saw in Bolton was the ugly, intolerant face of the Labour party — a mob, obscene gestures, ugly chants and a return of the political flying picket".

Mr Kinnock, at Labour's press conference, responded to Mr Major's attacks on his changes of mind and inexperience in office, saying: "The concentration of the Tories including nice Mr Major, on personal attacks is the strongest possible evidence of the poverty of their thinking, the paucity of their programme and the desperation of their tactics. Like me, the great majority of the British public will brush all that aside". The Tories, he said, were behaving like "the most rabid opposition". A Labour source said last night: "The government are trying to whip up excitement over the Bolton affair because of their desperate position."

Tory strategists believe the Bolton experience has helped

Mr Major to inject some zip into the Tory campaign. He surprised aides on Thursday night when he told them that he did not need to rehearse the speech he was shortly to deliver attacking Labour's taxation package.

An hour earlier in Bolton town centre, jeering demonstrators had forced the abandonment of Mr Major's walkabout. It was a frightening experience. Anger at being railroaded out of town was combined with satisfaction that what he was to call "the ugly face of Labour that I hate" had shown itself. Mr Major, the politician, was quick to appreciate the advantages of tarring Labour with the demonstration.

His aggression stoked up, he went to the hangar at Manchester airport to deliver a fighting speech that Tory strategists hope will help them turn the corner. The speech, meeting Mr Major's objective of exploiting John Smith's shadow budget tax increases, had been drafted on Tuesday by Nicholas True, a member of the Downing Street policy unit, following guidelines set by Mr Major.

With Labour apparently strengthening its position, Mr Major's advisers were agreed it was time to turn up the heat. On Thursday, as they flew to Lancashire, Mr Major and his team began work on the text. One of the Labour leader's most remembered speeches was his 1983 trade against Mrs Thatcher in which he warned people not to be sick, old or needy under the Tories. In the most quoted passage of his speech, Mr Major said that if there were a Labour government, "I warn you not to be ambitious. I warn you not to be qualified. I warn you not to be successful. I warn you not to save. I warn you not to buy a pension. I warn you not to own a home."



Looking back: Neil and Glenys Kinnock on a Labour podium. Bring back heckling and spontaneity, he says

Kinnock yearns for a heckler or two

By Jill Sherman, Political Correspondent

NEIL Kinnock yesterday yearned for old-style campaigning where he could get up on his soap box and take on hecklers.

After yet another day of electioneering dictated by the cameras rather than the voters, Mr Kinnock said he longed to return to the days when speeches, targeted at various sections of the audience, wrote themselves after interjections from hecklers. Speaking in Cardiff, he laid the blame for screened, ticketed rallies, cordoned off pavements and increased security firmly at the door of the electronic media.

"My interest is spontaneity

— opening the door for rallies and heckling. That sort of style suits me down to the ground. Unfortunately since the 1979 campaign onwards television makes an open door to people to demonstrate and disrupt," he said.

His first foray to meet the voters will be during two walkabouts in the safety of his own constituency today in Islwyn where he will meet his most loyal supporters. Yesterday, he condemned Mr Major's comments that Labour had hired a "rent a mob" for the anti-government protests during his walkabout in Bolton on Thursday.

"The Tories have completely abandoned any kind of positive campaign and they are going for all the billious attacks," he said. "We will not trade insults and we will not respond in kind". Mr Kinnock made it clear however that he did not condone what had happened in Bolton. "I think that on the streets, and I have experienced it myself, many politicians get mobbed. However I don't think that is any justification for any malicious attack."

Despite his evident frustration at being unable to get out and meet people, Mr Kinnock did conduct his first question and answer session at the University Hospital of

Wales, in Cardiff. He told junior doctors, nurses and midwives that Labour would provide incentives for hospitals to do more work and to increase standards. He said he would back a return to consensus management, rather than a return to the days when the medical profession had too much control, or more recently when managers dominated the service.

Dr Patrick Cartledge, a consultant paediatrician sporting a blue Tory rosette, criticised Labour's health plans. "I think the last thing we need is another change of emphasis and a different road for management."

Levitation party's campaign takes off

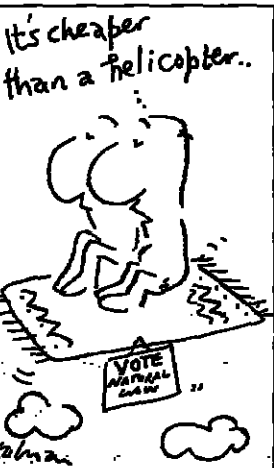
By Bill Frost

Boundless bliss, good health for all, full employment and an economic boom were dangled before the electorate yesterday by a cabinet-in-waiting made up of men in grey suits with frightening fixed smiles.

The Natural Law party, founded by followers of the guru Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, announced it was to contest all 651 constituencies at the election. Each candidate will limber up with a spot of Yogi-flying or levitation to clear the mind and counter campaign fatigue.

Dr Geoffrey Clements, party leader and proud owner of the most terrifying smile on display at the manifesto launch, promised voters everything short of eternal life and Bentley Turbos for all. "The ultimate goal of the Natural Law party is for everyone to enjoy heaven on earth through the implementation of his Holiness the Maharishi's master plan," he pronounced.

The fixed grins shared by his mystic politburo grew as Dr Clements, aged 43, added: "Our first task on winning office will be to set up a national fulfilment programme through transcendental meditation so people



can reach their full potential. We respect and admire the other parties but something deeper is needed to end Britain's problems."

Stress suffering and failure would be banished by the Natural Law party. Huge tax cuts would be made as the economy flourished like never before, war and crime would disappear for ever and vegetable oil would replace fossil fuels to reduce pollution. By now, Dr Clements's grey-suited followers on the platform were sporting expressions of unadulterated ecstasy.

Natural Law — the passport to heaven on earth — hinged on The Unified Field theories of quantum physics said another smiling man in a grey suit pointing at a bafflingly complex chart explaining the mysteries of the universe. "You will find it is all very simple."

One of the prospective candidates at campaign headquarters at Mentmore, Buckinghamshire, revealed the secrets and benefits of Yogi-flying but declined to demonstrate. "When one becomes expert it is also possible to fly unlimited."

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Tory dogs of war continue to hound Labour's budget

NORMAN Tebbit said this week, after two opinion polls had given Labour a five-point lead, it was time for the Tories to let loose the dogs of war. When I asked the prime minister on Wednesday what dogs he had to hand he would not name any.

Instead he barked himself, setting about John Smith's shadow budget on Thursday as a "devil's cocktail of incompetence and malice", portraying 16 months of world statesmanship compared with Neil Kinnock's inexperience and turning back on Labour's leader his famous warning not to be old or sick or unemployed under the Tories.

If there were ever to be a Labour government, said Mr Major: "I warn you not to be ambitious. I warn you not to be qualified. I warn you not to be successful. I warn you not to save. I warn you not to buy a pension. I warn you not to own a home."

A sign of desperation, said Mr Kinnock yesterday. Not so, it was a sign that at long last we had a real election on our hands, with Labour's leader too in irrepressibly good form as he mocked Mr Major's talk of the Tories building foundations: "Foundations? I know Rome wasn't built in a day. But after thirteen years, foundations..."

Labour has had the best of the first week and the Tories know it. John Smith's shadow budget on Monday was an effective public relations coup, planting widely the thought that eight out of ten electors would benefit from Labour's tax changes. The unemployment figures on Thursday kept ministers on the defensive and the taxation themes that the Tories are hammering stayed stubbornly low in the opinion poll tables of issues causing voters concern.

Tory officials were reduced to pointing out yesterday that at this stage in the 1987 election they hadn't even begun campaigning. They didn't need to. At this stage in the 1987 election they had a 12 point lead. Meanwhile, the prime minister promised to go on and on and on about Labour's taxation plans that is.



fact, was busy but uninspiring. Labour's safety first effort, telling us as much about the party's strategy as it did about what it would, was bland and predictable.

With the country stuck in recession Mr Kinnock offers action and movement while the Tories are stuck with waiting for a confidence factor which will not show until after an election. They are concentrating all their efforts on two themes—John Major's leadership and Labour's taxation plans.

The problem with the Tories' strategy is that they had to begin deploying it back in January to stop Labour mov-

ing away to an unassailable lead. Now the endless assaults on Labour's tax plans, which drew blood with the dropping of the savings tax, sound jaded, even if Mr Smith's shadow budget has given them a new focus. The media have heard it all before.

The Tories' own budget has been forgotten and everything is now being pinned on the Tory belief that the country will prefer John Major to Neil Kinnock and that Mr Smith has overdone his tax raids on the middle class, middle income earners.

The new phase which began yesterday is seeking to convince the eighty per cent who do gain under Mr Smith's plans that they will gain only a few pence, while Labour's spending plans will drive up interest rates and kill off jobs. It is a strategy of "Don't vote Labour because things will get even worse."

But Labour, too, has gambled that in aiming for the £10,000 to £20,000 earners

and writing off most of those above that figure. With Mr Kinnock doing what he does best, stomping platforms around the country with lip-curling scorn for the achievements of Tory government and the misery induced by the recession, Labour has been able to present itself as the party which will do something. Its press conferences are slick and carefully themed. But the party is still prone to muddle over its spending commitments as with Mr Hattersley's gaffe on water privatisation.

The Liberal Democrats intriguingly have held their position in the opening week, not suffering the squeeze that many expected. This is only the first week, and an untypical week at that. But what we know now is that Labour has developed the confidence that it can go all the way to a record-breaking eight per cent swing for victory.

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MATTHEW PARRIS

Paddy takes the high ground in Militant country

"OOPS! Something's just come flying out of the window." Something had. From which floor of the Shield flats towering above us, was uncertain. Militant was strong here. Many windows displayed "Vote Terry Fields" posters. "I think we'd better not look at it," said a tactful Mrs Rawsthorne, of the residents' association. "They've already chucked a couple of milk bottles from the top floor." Rosemary Cooper's agent had told me.

I was in Liverpool, Broadgreen. Rosemary Cooper is the Liberal Democrat challenger to not one, but two "Labour" candidates: the official one, plus the infamous Terry Fields militant sympathiser, poll tax jailbird, and for nine years Broadgreen's Labour MP. Expelled from his party, Fields' posters still call him "Labour". Yesterday morning was the Terry vs Rosie show.

And Paddy was imminent. Paddy was pausing to pose with Rosie. Sheltering from missiles, I chatted with a tiny band of residents hoping to meet him. "Do you all live here?"

"We exist here," said Mrs Rawsthorne — tiny, neat, dressed as for church. She, Mrs Whitfield, Mrs Graham and her son Gary, described the hazards. "There are junkies here," Mrs Rawsthorne said.

"And plonkies," (alcoholics) added Mrs Graham: "I caught one urinating on my door. Complain, and they threaten to put your windows in."

"The caretaker collects needles off the ground every morning," said Gary. "There's a schizophrenic," said Mrs Whitfield. "You see that man there?" — the Liberal agent pointed to a gnome-like figure in a red cap delivering Terry Fields leaflets — "he was thrown out for keeping 12 alsatians, and shovelling the poo off his seventh floor balcony onto us."

"Five alsatians," said Mrs Graham, "and three ferrets."

These were decent people, trapped in a nightmare. We Times readers insist that the homeless be housed, not that they are not housed, next door to us. "The homeless are not respectable people," said Mrs Rawsthorne, despairingly, as the "something" hit the ground.

What did they expect of Paddy? "Shall we ask about

the other woman?" giggled one lady, more in excitement than censure. "I don't know about Paddy, but we'll vote for Rosie Cooper if she shows her face here. And in all honesty she does."

The big yellow double-decker bus arrived. It could have been from another planet. Scores of men in suits, men with cameras and big, fluffy mikes, swirled around it. My little group, theoretically the reason for all this, felt completely superfluous. Mr Ashdown emerged from the melee and plunged towards us.

Animated cartoons, they say, are just a series of still poses, run together so fast that eye and brain interpret it as movement. Mr Ashdown proceeds like this: from pose to pose, at terrific pace. A handshake here, an arm on a shoulder there, and then a quick, visionary glance into the middle distance, eyes narrowed like a ship's captain. Rosie, a large, motherly figure with a Liverpool accent, seemed more real. I had the impression that she knows Broadgreen and Broadgreen knows her.

Paddy needed coaching. Achieving five handshakes and "hiyabos" in as many seconds, he asked: "Now you're the ones that are hoping to be rehoused..."

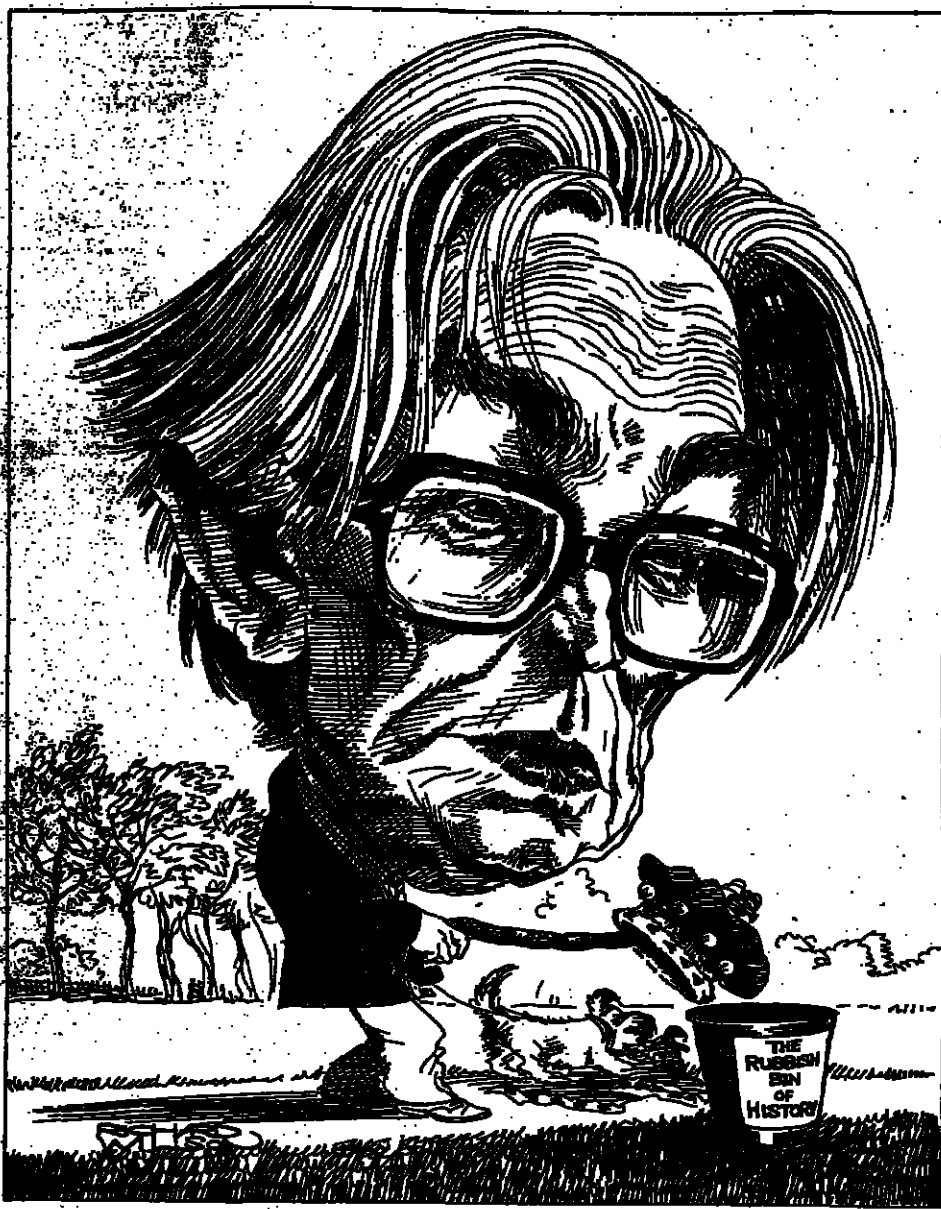
"Sorry, Paddy, no," Rosie interrupted, "these are the ones who are worried about security, and lifts."

"Ah. Lifts." (Brainwaves) "Let's try the stairs." Off and upwards stormed our paratrooper. Fleet Street's best painting behind. Rosie tried the lift. "I got stuck in this for half an hour once," she said, as the doors closed, "firemen rescued me."

Paddy's visit to the ninth floor was accomplished with military precision. Every so often he would stop, turn to the cameras, freeze, and say something quotable. "There's only one party that's ever tried to do anything for the people of Liverpool..." then jerk forward again. Minutes later he was back in the bus with entourage, ready to go forward, to posters new. Once more into the preach, dear friends.

But someone was missing. Where was Rosie? Mrs Rawsthorne guessed immediately. There was a shriek of delight from a blonde girl with tattoos, delivering Terry Fields leaflets.

Rosie Cooper was stuck in the lift.



Retiring Foot says he would refuse peerage

BY ROBIN OAKLEY, POLITICAL EDITOR

MICHAEL Foot, the former Labour leader, will not accept a peerage after the election and follow Harold Wilson and Jim Callaghan to the House of Lords, he tells Channel 4's *A Week in Politics* today. He will be the first postwar Labour leader to retire from the Commons and not go to the Lords.

Mr Foot, who retired from the Commons this week after representing Plymouth Devonport from 1945-55, Ebbw Vale from 1960-83 and Blaenau Gwent from 1983, says: "I think the House of Lords ought to be abolished and I don't think the best way for me to abolish it is to go there myself. I know that some people have to go there to finish it off — and that is a very tempting offer, if it were ever to be made to me, but I have got some other more important business I would like to transact."

A much-loved figure in the Labour party, Mr Foot says that he would prefer to speak at Hyde Park Corner than in the Lords. Labour is now pledged to replace the Lords

with a new elected second chamber which will have the power to delay for the lifetime of a parliament change to designated legislation reducing individual or constitutional rights.

In his interview Mr Foot recalls Remembrance Sunday in 1981, when as party leader he was criticised for his dress at the Cenotaph wreath-laying. He says: "I did have some trouble at the Cenotaph because people thought I was wearing a donkey jacket or something that was disrespectful to the Queen. As a matter of fact, when I left the place and went back into the Foreign Office with my jacket on, the Queen Mother said to me: 'That's a nice jacket you have got on. It is nice to have a nice warm one on a cold day like this.'"

At the time Mrs Thatcher was in a black coat and David Steel, then Liberal leader, was in morning dress. That month (November 1981) a Gallup poll gave him the lowest popularity rating of any opposition leader since polling began.

Guildford counts on success

Guildford, the first constituency to declare its result in 1983, is hoping to be first again on April 9. It was second to Torbay in 1987 but a change of count venue makes another win unlikely for the Devon seat. Staff from banks, building societies and insurance firms will count ballot papers nationwide.

Heseltine rival

Michael Heseltine faces a pro-Thatcher candidate at Henley. Alan Plane, aged 67, an oil consultant, is standing as Anti-Heseltine Keep Britain Independent. In 1990 the local party was split over the environment secretary's role in Margaret Thatcher's downfall.

Office burgled

The offices of Tony Favell, a Tory defending his seat in Stockport, Cheshire, were ransacked yesterday. Thieves took the local party's computer containing membership details and the telephone lines were cut.

Greens ousted

The Green party lost its only county council seat in England to the Tories in a by-election at the Isle of Wight's St Helens and Nettlesome division.

Major defends high borrowing policy

BY NICHOLAS WOOD, POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

JOHN Major yesterday defended the government's handling of the nation's finances in the wake of Margaret Thatcher's warning about the perils of excessive borrowing and spending.

Mr Major insisted that the shock rise in the public sector borrowing requirement to £28 billion did not herald a spending surge and that the PSBR might return to surplus. "The key policy is this: we intend to retain prudent control over public expenditure and public finances and keep them in balance over the business cycle."

"We are aiming to get back towards balance and to balance and no doubt when we get to the top of the business cycle again, we may even move back into surplus," he said, as he was questioned about Mrs Thatcher's speech to her Finchley constituency on Thursday night in which she extolled the virtues of good housekeeping in matters of national finance.

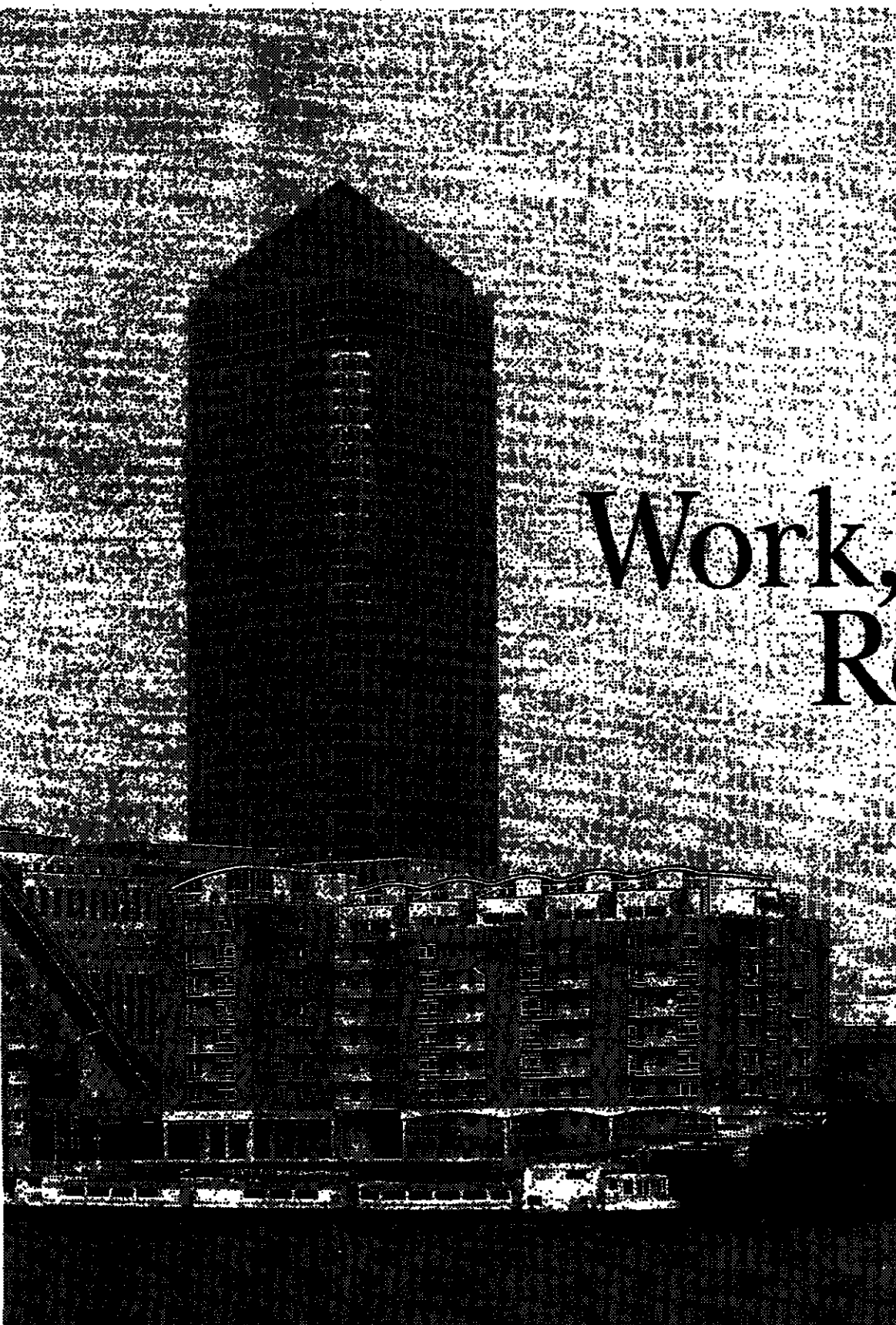
"I'll tell you what sound finance means," she said. "It means living within your means. It's a concept well known to families and businesses and it should be very

well known to governments too. It means having to say no to some public expenditure that takes you over your top limit."

Mr Major told a London press conference that the PSBR of 4.5 per cent of gross domestic product was less than that in Germany or America. It had arisen because Exchequer revenues had been depressed by the recession, but they would revive once the consumer and housing markets picked up.

Maintaining the pressure on Labour's tax plans, Norman Lamont, the Chancellor, accused John Smith, his counterpart, of producing a "Polo mint budget" because the gains were so tiny. "Most of the so-called 'gainers' gain a pathetic 2p a week, or the price of a Polo mint. But the millions of losers, including those with personal pensions, pay through the nose."

Paddy Ashdown predicted last night at his adoption meeting in Yeovil, Somerset that Britain's economic plight could become catastrophic under a Conservative or Labour government. Only the Liberal Democrats would tell voters the truth.



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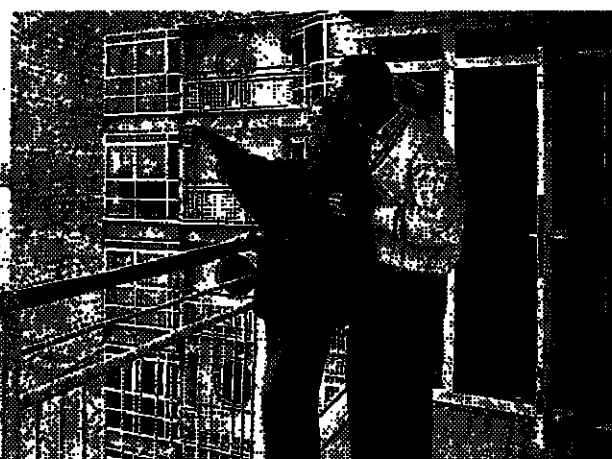
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DOLPHIN

Now you T it, now you don't: the Tory poster before the vandals got to it, left, and, right, the poster conveys the opposite message after a quick cut-and-paste job on the apostrophe and the T

ADVERTISING boardings bearing the Conservative slogan: "You can't trust Labour" are being turned to Labour's advantage in one of the cheekier displays of enterprise of the election campaign. Armed with white paper, paste and not a little nerve, opponents of the Tories are covering over the T to leave the poster bearing the message:

"You can trust Labour". Labour's headquarters in Walworth Road quickly distanced itself from such activities. "This is criminal damage, plain vandalism, and we obviously do not support it," a spokesman said. "I

am aware that this has been going on because there is one of those posters just 100 yards from Walworth Road at Elephant and Castle and that has been changed."

Asked if Labour party supporters were behind the campaign, she said: "I take it it is not members of the Conservative party, but there is nothing to say it is Labour party members either. For all we know it could be someone out to discredit the

Labour party. It wouldn't be the first time." The Tories, who put up the posters as part of a £20-million campaign strategy, have set up a "hotline" to receive reports of where and when posters have been changed so they

can reinstate the displaced apostrophe and letter T. Imperial Tobacco has donated about 2,000 poster boarding sites nationwide to the Tories free of charge until April 9. The party has 5,000 sites in all. A

spokesman at Conservative central office confirmed that the posters were being changed back but refused to discuss the cost of reinstating defaced posters. Labour has taken 2,500 sites in the run-up to the election. A fund-raising memorandum from Larry Whitty to party members says each prime site in a marginal constituency will cost £800.

Vandals take the T out of Tory poster campaign

Tories dispute local finance figures

Gould dismisses fear of spending bonanza

By NICHOLAS WOOD, POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

THE discipline of annual council elections would help to keep rates bills in check once capping had been abolished by a Labour government, Bryan Gould said yesterday.

Unveiling new figures comparing Labour's property-based "fair rates" proposals with the government's alternatives, Labour's environment spokesman said that the bill for the average family in the coming year would be £168 less than under the poll tax and £114 less than under the Conservatives' council tax replacement. The council tax, due to be introduced next year, is also property-based, but with a 25 per cent discount for people living alone.

Mr Gould denied that his

figures were meaningless because Labour would abolish capping and give councils a free hand to set bills. "You either believe in local government democracy or you do not," Mr Gould said. "We intend to strengthen that local democracy by ensuring that the voters, in annual elections, will be able to give their judgment on the spending, service plans and performance of their councils." Labour wants a proportion of each council's seats to be up for election annually.

Mr Gould ruled out a spending bonanza for local government. He would keep a "very tight rein" on local authorities to make sure that their Whitehall grant was kept under control.

Phyllis Starkey, Labour leader of Oxford city council, supporting Mr Gould, said that this year the government had set the budget for every council in the country. "Central planning has been given up in eastern Europe, but seems to be flourishing in this country," she said.

David Blunkett, Labour's local government spokesman, said that Michael Heseltine, the environment secretary, had opposed capping while a backbencher. Mr Heseltine had written in *The Times* in 1990 that if the government set a capping level, those below it spent up to it.

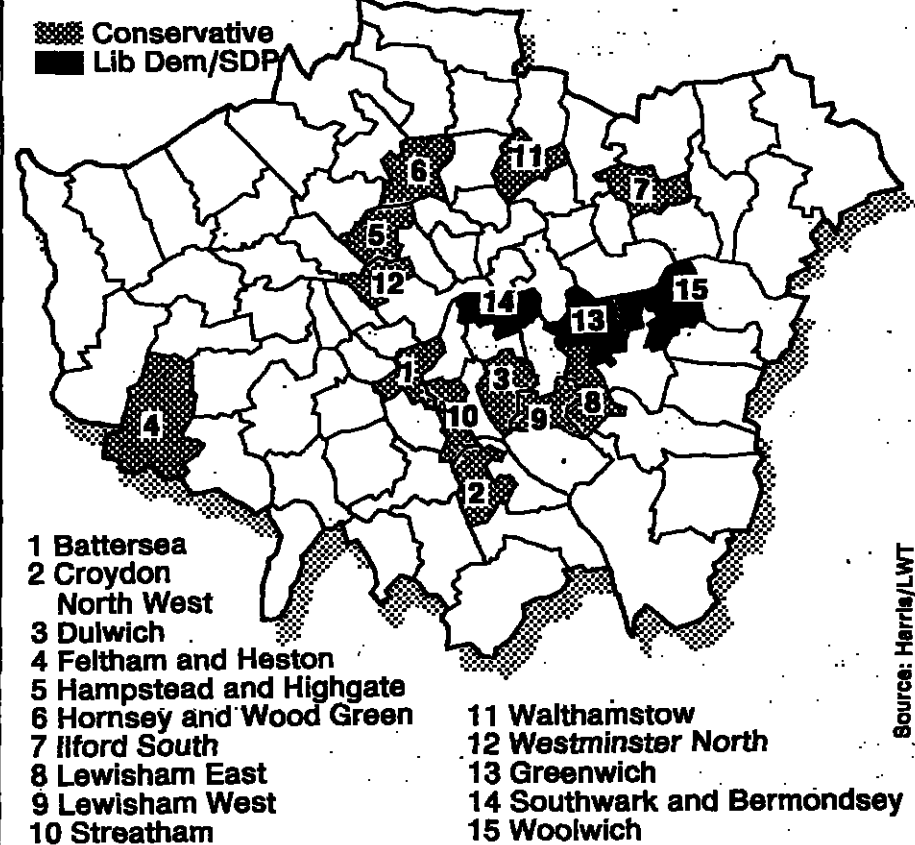
The Conservatives disputed Mr Gould's figures. Michael Portillo, local government minister, said they were "spurious in the extreme" and contained five fundamental errors. "Everybody knows that if capping is abolished, local spending will soar sky high," he said.

Mr Gould said that the £114 additional cost of the Tory council tax comprised £11 for administration, £21 to make up collection losses, £29 to pay for the transitional relief scheme easing the switch from the old rating system to the poll tax, and £53 for the single-person discount.

Mr Portillo said that Mr Gould's talk of average fair rates bills being lower than average council tax bills was "mathematical nonsense".

To raise the same sum from the same number of houses required the same average bill. "There are 18.9 million properties in England and this year we need to raise £6.8 billion, so the average per household is £360."

LABOUR THREAT TO LONDON'S MARGINALS



Crucial fight: the seats said to be vulnerable to a 6 per cent swing to Labour

Labour leads in marginals

By ARTHUR LEATHLEY

LABOUR has taken a three-point lead in key Conservative marginal constituencies they need to win to form the next government, according to a poll released last night. The six per cent swing to Labour in the London seats, however, would not be enough to give Neil Kinnock an overall majority in the next parliament.

The London Weekend Television-Harris poll, conducted for *The London Programme*, covered all 21 Tory marginal constituencies in the capital and put Labour 43 per cent, ahead of the Conservatives (40), Liberal Democrats (12) and "others" (6).

The poll suggested that the

swing would give Labour at least 12 seats, including a win for Glenda Jackson over the Tory candidate Oliver Letwin in Hampstead and Highgate, in northwest London. If voting followed the lines of polling, the Lewisham West seat of John Maples, the Treasury economic secretary, would go to Labour, as would Streatham, Hornsey and Wood Green, Battersea and Dulwich. Other Labour targets, including Mitcham and Morden, Kensington and Putney would remain Tory.

Mistrust of far-left Labour councils remains an important issue for London voters, says the poll. More than half questioned agreed with the statement that Labour's local government record was "extreme and inefficient". Ministers, led by Michael Heseltine, the environment secretary, have been anxious to make local government in London an important election issue, citing Labour London boroughs' spending.

Field work for the polls was completed before yesterday's

launch of the Tories' manifesto for London, which criticised Labour plans for an elected Greater London authority and instead proposes a Cabinet sub-committee to co-ordinate London policy. The results come a month after unpublished Conservative Central Office surveys showed that the Tories' grip on London was slipping, giving them only a 2.6 per cent lead in seats where they beat Labour into second place in the last general election.

Marginal seats in the capital are considered a crucial battleground for the main parties in this campaign. Labour said last night that the swing indicated by the poll would also give the party three Liberal Democrat seats in the capital, in Woolwich, Greenwich and Southwark and Bermondsey. The poll was carried out among 865 voters during March 15-18. A poll of polls published by the *Evening Standard* put Labour two points ahead yesterday. Results: Labour 41 per cent, Conservatives 39, and Liberal Democrats, 16.8.

Figures and facts juggled in battle of the council bill

By DOUGLAS BROOM
LOCAL GOVERNMENT CORRESPONDENT

CALCULATING machines had a tough day yesterday as Labour and the Conservatives traded figures and accusations over the relative merits of their local tax plans.

Bryan Gould began it all with his assertion that the "typical" household would be £114 a year better off under Labour's fair rates than under the Tories' proposed council tax. The claim was based on his figure for an "average" council tax bill of £504 per property in England, compared to an average fair rates bill of £390.

Michael Portillo, the local government minister, confronted with the figures on breakfast radio, described them as "bogus", and Conservative Central Office began a frantic attempt to decipher them.

What threw Smith Square was that Labour's figures for the council tax in each area bore little relation to the only official council tax predictions, published last year by the environment department.

In the marginal seat of Wallasey, where Lynda Chalker, the overseas development minister, has a 279 majority, Labour said the average council tax would be £518 for a two-adult household. The table put out by the environment department last year said the figure was £456.

Denied access to the civil service during an election, Central Office was stumped. As the day wore on, the Tories became more mystified. By late afternoon, one said: "We are still scratching our heads. The pollsters thing we can say is that their figures are ludicrous."

At Labour's Walworth Road headquarters, researchers insisted that their figures had been produced by respected experts on local government finance using sophisticated computer models. They said that their figures differed from the environment department's because of three factors, the first of which was that after the official figures' release, the government had added a tax band for high-value homes. Secondly, said Labour, they had rejected the unrealistic

assumption behind the government figures that councils would be able to collect 100 per cent of what they were owed under the new tax. Labour's computer modellers had assumed that only 94.5 per cent would be collectable, roughly the same as final figures for the poll tax.

Thirdly, they said they had assumed that the council tax would save only £100 million a year in administration costs because of the complex system of discounts and rebates ministers had introduced since it was proposed.

Labour's fair rates, which would be based on the 1973 valuation lists that were in use until introduction of the poll tax in 1990, would save £300 million, and councils could expect 98 per cent of their entitlement.

Assuming Labour's arithmetic is sound, and blinking at their other assumptions, the published figures still fail to tell the whole story. How can two tax systems supposedly intended to raise the same total produce average bills that vary by over 20 per cent?

The answer seems to lie in Labour's choice of a two-adult household as "typical". For the purpose of fair rates, any size household will do because the tax is on the property.

The Tories' council tax, by contrast, would give a 25 per cent discount to people living alone. Labour calculations assume that the £1 billion cost of the discount would be spread across the country. They also assume that because "fair" rates bills will be closer to the old rates bills, the £500 million earmarked to help those worst hit by the change from rates to poll tax will be similarly absorbed.

The published council tax figures take no account of either discount, and spreading the effect nationally would reduce "headline" council tax much closer to Labour's average.

Labour might have presented the figures more fairly if it had stated the rate in the pound that would be charged in each area under its system. Householders could calculate liability from water rate bills, which note rateable values.

Ashdown promises £1.2bn for new homes

THE Liberal Democrats pledged yesterday to invest £1.2 billion in providing new homes for rent and encouraging more new housing through a partnership between the private and public sectors.

Paddy Ashdown also promised that no present recipient of mortgage tax relief would be out of pocket under Liberal Democrat proposals even though the party eventually wants to replace mortgage interest tax relief with extra help for first time buyers and tenants.

People facing repossession would be helped by lenders being encouraged to convert mortgages into rents. The

benefits system would be reformed to aid those seeking rents and deposits. "The spectre of homelessness now stalks Britain as much as unemployment," Mr Ashdown said in London yesterday. "Ever-growing unemployment is depressing the housing market, and the depressed housing market is undermining the confidence needed for an economic recovery."

Mark Hayes, chairman of the party's housing policy panel, outlined the aim to provide cheap, high-quality housing for rent and for sale through a partnership between the public and private sectors.

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Housing 'a bigger issue than health'

By RACHEL KELLY, PROPERTY CORRESPONDENT

VOTERS are more worried about housing and homelessness than about health and education, but unemployment is their biggest concern, according to a Mori survey conducted for Shelter, the pressure group for the homeless.

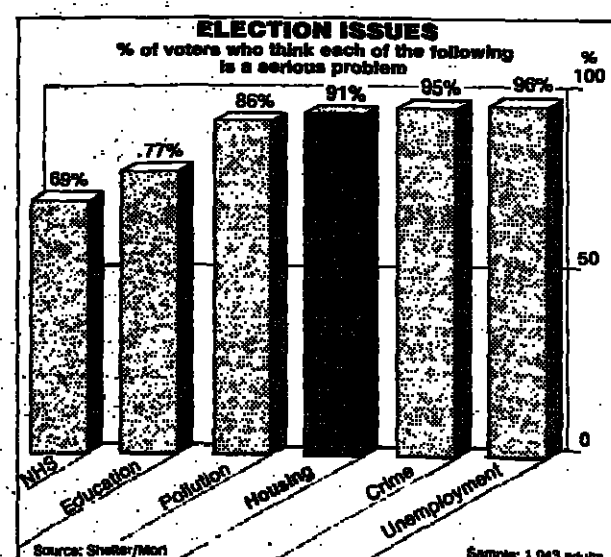
Asked to rate the seriousness of the housing and homelessness problem, with one of five answers ranging from "very serious" to "not a problem", 91 per cent of voters said the problem was very or fairly serious.

The issue of education standards in schools was rated as very or fairly serious by 77 per cent, and the quality of the health service was rated the same by 69 per cent. Unemployment was seen as the most important issue by

those polled, judged by 96 per cent to be very or fairly important, followed by crime.

Voters were not asked how they rated the importance of inflation or taxation as issues. The poll looked at particular issues in detail, rather than all the issues which affected voters. Robert Worcester, from Mori, said:

"The survey showed that 66 per cent of respondents thought that the parties' policies on housing and homelessness would affect the way that they voted, and 64 per cent of voters said that the political parties did not pay much attention to these problems. All the political parties are out of touch in terms of the attention that they are giving to housing and voters' concerns." Sheila



McKechmie, the director of Shelter, said:

Voters also expressed ways to improve housing and homelessness. Seventy-one per cent said mortgage tax relief should be redistributed to help those on low incomes more and those on high in-

comes less. The Liberal Democrats are the only party committed to redistributing mortgage interest tax relief. The survey also found that seventy per cent of voters disagreed with the statement that "rising house prices are a good thing".

Nationalist leaders divided over IRA

Adams clashes with Hume in TV debate

BY EDWARD GORMAN, IRELAND CORRESPONDENT

FOR the first time in four years, Gerry Adams, the Sinn Féin president, yesterday debated publicly with John Hume, leader of the SDLP, the best way to achieve peace in Northern Ireland.

Taking advantage of the relaxation of broadcasting restrictions during the election, BBC radio and television stations broadcast exchanges between the two men in Belfast. The discussion, the first since secret talks between their parties in 1988, was at times volatile, underlining the distrust and disagreement within the nationalist community.

Mr Adams seemed determined to take advantage of his first opportunity since 1988, when the broadcasting of Sinn Féin interviews was banned, to display his distaste for the SDLP's constitutional nationalism. He repeatedly tried to interrupt Mr

Hume. While both men said that they wanted peace in Ireland, they differed greatly on how best it could be achieved. Mr Adams said that IRA violence and all other violence in Northern Ireland was a symptom not a cause of the problem. He said that the IRA could not lay down its weapons until the root causes of injustice in Ireland, the British presence upholding a divisive "apartheid" state, had been removed.

He argued that Sinn Féin (which at the last election received 11 per cent of the nationalist vote in Northern Ireland) already had a democratic mandate and should be involved in what he called an "inclusive dialogue". He said that the United Nations and

the European Community should be called in to help to find a democratic resolution.

John Hume said that there was not a single injustice in Northern Ireland that justified the taking of a single life. He said 3,000 people had died, and Northern Ireland was being starved of investment because of the violence. British troops were only on the streets because of violence which was exacerbating division, not healing it.

Mr Hume argued that Britain now formally accepted that Irish unity was there for the taking if those Irish people who wanted it could persuade those who did not, that it was the best way forward.

He said that Mr Adams should recognise that the talks process offered an historic opportunity. For the first time everyone involved, the two governments, the SDLP and the Unionists, recognised that all aspects of the problem were up for discussion.

"What I would like to see and I have said this time out of number — would be a complete cessation of the IRA campaign and then Sinn Féin can take their place like any other party that has a democratic mandate, around the table," Mr Hume said.

The debate, in which Mr Adams argued ultimately for a unilateral British withdrawal, demonstrated that 22 years into the troubles his party and the IRA are still publicly at least — not contemplating either a cease-fire or a compromise.

Mr Hume, while being repeatedly interrupted, said that the one thing he never wanted to see was a British government leaving Ireland on a unilateral basis. "If the British government withdraws before agreement is reached among the people here, everyone knows that there is a very high risk of perpetual violence like Beirut on our streets. I am not prepared to take that risk."



Split vision: Gerry Adams, left, and John Hume, chatting amicably in the studio before their heated debate

Kaufman criticised for dual loyalty remark

BY RUTH GLEDHILL, RELIGION CORRESPONDENT

GERALD Kaufman, shadow foreign secretary, has been criticised by some members of the Board of Deputies of British Jews, according to yesterday's *Jewish Chronicle*. Mr Kaufman angered fellow Jews by his reference to dual loyalties, the paper says.

Mr Kaufman told the *Chronicle* this month that British Jews should not confuse their affection for Israel with loyalty to Britain. "We cannot give first loyalty to another country, even one that has such a special place in our hearts," he said.

Yesterday's *Chronicle* reports a recent meeting of the board at which the president, Israel Feinstein, said: "We must repudiate the notion that there is any substance in that accusation. We are loyal Jews of this country, playing our proper part."

Eric Moonman, a former

board vice-president and a former Labour MP, said that he was troubled and saddened by the implications of Mr Kaufman's comments. Another deputy, Jerry Lewis, advised against attacking Mr Kaufman since it could harm the Jewish community if he became foreign secretary.

A letter in yesterday's *Chronicle* criticises the hostility shown to Mr Kaufman by the Jewish community.

In his interview, published on March 6, Mr Kaufman also said that he would want cordial relations with whatever government Israelis elect, but he preferred to see Yitzhak Rabin as prime minister. Labour had no plan to give diplomatic status to the PLO representative in London, and a Labour government would impose strict controls on arms sales to the Middle East.

Leaked letter predicted SNP rise

BY KERRY GILL

JOHN Major was warned of the election threat posed by the Scottish National Party in a confidential letter from Ian Lang, the Scottish secretary, shortly before the election was called, it was disclosed yesterday.

The document, leaked to the Labour party, contains an admission that Scottish Conservatives believed that they were under threat from all three opposition parties north of the border. In the letter, written earlier this month on Scottish Office writing paper, Mr Lang told the prime minister: "It is almost as important to us to keep the SNP at bay as it is to use them to split the socialist vote."

The letter discloses that Mr Major and Norman Lamont, the Chancellor, had reservations about a booklet published by Mr Lang giving details of government reve-

nue and spending in Scotland. In the letter, written before the booklet's publication, Mr Lang said that he was disappointed by their attitude. "With apologies for persisting on this occasion, I would ask you to reconsider publication while there is still time," he wrote.

Mr Lang continued: "We are engaged in a complex exercise to outflank three other parties, each of whom threatens us in a different way. This initiative could score against all of them. Our real prospects of an electoral advance rest on our positive advancement of the union. In this booklet is proof positive that the union is of hard and substantial benefit to Scotland."

Jim Sillars, SNP deputy

leader, said: "This proves that the SNP threat to the Tories is a very clear one indeed. It proves that the Conservative seats that we have in our sights are going to fall into the SNP column at the election. They will help Scotland to win independence in Europe."

Yesterday, Mr Lang said: "If the Labour party are reduced to scavenging around for alleged leaked or even stolen documents they must be short of something to say." The Scottish Office refused to comment.

Douglas Hurd yesterday returned to Scotland to give a warning that a break-up of its union with England would be an act of "unparalleled vandalism" that would be regretted by succeeding generations.

The foreign secretary spent much of his visit, his second

to Scotland in three weeks, attacking those who would destroy the present constitutional arrangement. Labour's devolution plans were "punk federalist" and the SNP's goal of independence would lead to years of uncertainty and wrangling over the question of entry into the EC.

"Together we have built a United Kingdom, which continues to enjoy a unique and influential position in world affairs and is one of the great trading nations of the world. Its destruction would be an act of unparalleled vandalism," Mr Hurd said.

He added that the SNP's economic policies would be incompatible with EC treaties. "Having cast off what they see as the yoke of Westminster, an SNP government would soon find itself hauled over the coals by Brussels," he said.

Hecklers of bygone age live again

BY CRAIG SETON

The parliamentary candidate was making hard work of a speech about his party's commitment to ending unemployment and the crowd was becoming bored. A drunken housewife, bottle in hand, tried to enliven the proceedings with some ripe abuse and from the platform came the response: "Upstart woman, be off with you."

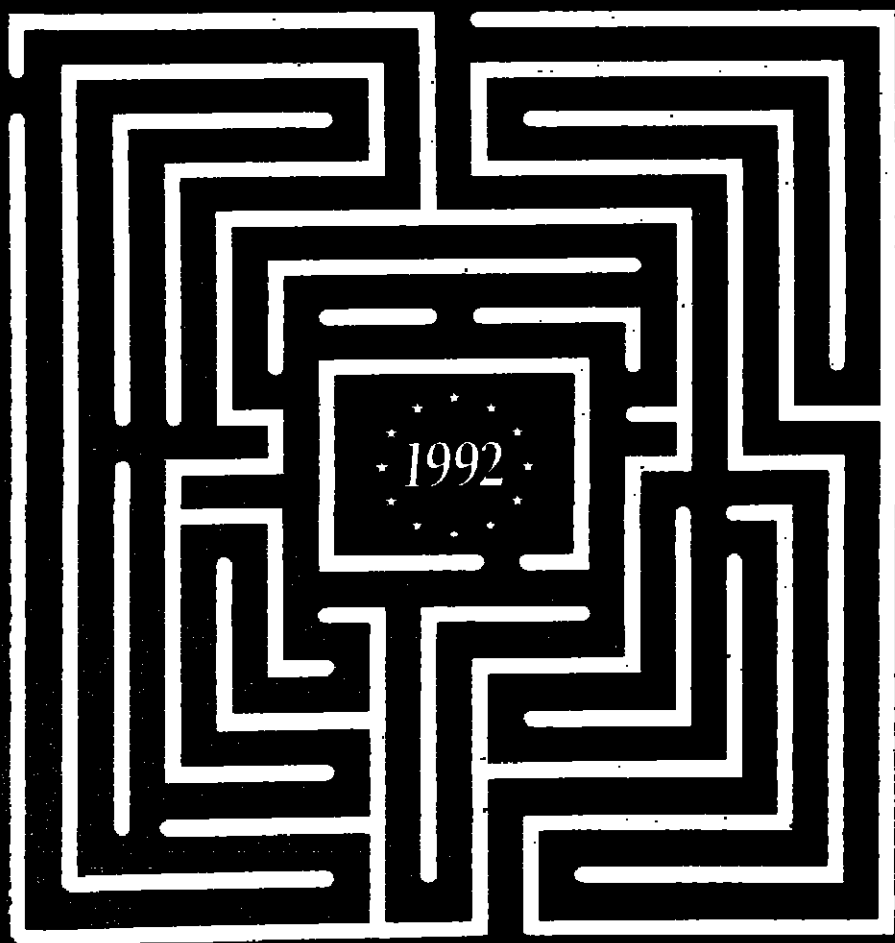
She staggered away and the hapless candidate pressed on, trying to ignore the hecklers, as someone else demanded to know where the money would come from to get the jobless back to work. The Liberal hopeful shouted back an answer: "I will tell you where it will come from. It is coming out of the pockets of the rich. That is what we intend to do and that is what we are going to do." The crowd cheered.

The cut and thrust of the open air meeting was a refreshing change from the stage-managed party presentations and glibly political broadcasts on television. It was not a scene from the general election campaign, but a re-enactment of one from the parliamentary contest of 1892.

The event is being staged daily in the authentic setting of a Victorian street recreated at the Blists Hill Open Air Museum near Telford, Shropshire. It will continue throughout the general election campaign for visitors seeking refuge from the bombardment of election news and to give schoolchildren some idea of the changes in parliamentary democracy during the last 100 years.

Staff are dressing in period costume for scenes set in the old Wellington division of Salop. Only men were allowed to vote, but many were disenfranchised unless they were householders, lodgers paying more than £10 a year, or renting business premises worth £10 a year. Women had no vote and it seems their plight was not raised in the campaign.

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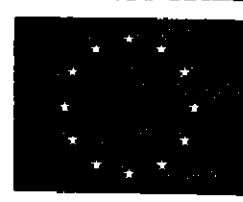
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Li Peng links up with Peking hardliners to curb liberal reforms

FROM CATHERINE SAMPSON IN PEKING

THE Chinese power struggle intensified yesterday when Li Peng, the prime minister, in a speech opening the annual parliamentary session, failed to align himself with attacks on hardliners by Deng Xiaoping, China's senior leader.

Mr Li's calls for economic innovation and a bolder attitude towards reform were only a weak echo of Mr Deng's. Far stronger were his warnings against the spread of Western ideas. "We must be on the watch for any ideological trend towards bourgeois liberalisation, checking it the moment it appears," he said.

The failure of Mr Li wholeheartedly to endorse the politico's 100-year reform programme indicated that the political struggle between Mr Deng and his conservative rivals was far from over. By not repeating the politico's decision to "resist the left", Mr Li appeared to place himself firmly in the conservative camp and to put his political future at risk.

Shots fired at leader in Japan

Tokyo: Shin Kanemaru, the vice-president of Japan's ruling Liberal Democratic party, was shot at by a self-proclaimed right-wing activist as he was speaking at a political convention yesterday. The man was immediately overpowered by police and Mr Kanemaru was seen wiping his forehead in relief that he had not been hit.

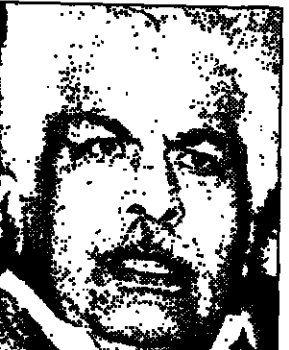
Police had thought that the 38-year-old was a toy, but later they discovered bullet marks. Mr Kanemaru has been criticised by the right wing for advocating links with North Korea. Last year a firebomb was thrown near his home. The gunman, identified as Hiroshi Watanabe, aged 22, was charged with attempted murder. (AFP)

Kenyan ban political rallies

Nairobi: Kenyan authorities have banned political meetings amid mounting tribal violence which the government has been accused of instigating as a pretext to cancel the multi-party elections promised for later this year.

The United States has urged President Moi to stem the bloodletting, which has killed 58 people in the past 11 days. Smith Hempstone, the American ambassador, also expressed concern about the recent clashes between police using tear gas and opposition demonstrators. (AFP)

Bhutto alliance



Karachi: Ghulam Mustafa Jatoi, above, a former caretaker prime minister of Pakistan, has allied with Benazir Bhutto, the opposition Pakistan People's Party leader, to try to topple Mian Nawaz Sharif's government. His National People's Party has been expelled from the ruling Islamic Democratic Alliance.

Plot revealed

Sivas: Brigadier Siveneri Rabuka, leader of the 1987 coup, has said that Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara, the prime minister, asked him to overthrow the government after he lost an election. Fiji's Daily Post reported. (Reuters)

Population gap

Lagos: The Nigerian government seems to have miscalculated 32 million citizens. Its census lists 88.5 million, compared with a United Nations estimate of 120.5 million.

Trek back out

Pertis: Fifty-six Chinese boat people who survived a 125-mile trek through the northern outback, eating snakes, crocodiles and lizards, have been refused refugee status, officials said. (AP)

Already Mr Deng's call for a purge of hardliners has led to the resignation of He Jingzhi, the hardline acting minister of culture. Gao Di, editor-in-chief of the People's Daily and Wang Renzhi, head of propaganda, are believed to be next.

In another potent symbol of Mr Li's awkward position, he has cancelled the ritual press conference which he usually holds at the end of the National People's Congress session. Many Chinese believe that Mr Li is not prepared to answer potentially embarrassing questions about who is to be purged from the leadership.

Mr Li is widely unpopular in China because of his role in declaring martial law in 1989. Many people believe that he may not be asked to stay on as prime minister when his term ends next year.

The prime minister has always been seen as, at best, a cautious reformer. But he is also considered to be an opportunist and had been expected at this point to jump on Mr Deng's bandwagon of radical economic reform to safeguard his position. In fact, Mr Li offered no ideas for concrete reform, nor did he repeat Mr Deng's call for capitalist methods to be used to enhance China's socialist economy.

Mr Deng is believed to be deeply unhappy with the performances of both Mr Li and Jiang Zemin, the head of the Communist party. Until now, the two men have stayed in place to present a united face to the world.

Perhaps reflecting concern

among hardliners that any talk of economic liberalisation could stir up more popular dissent, Mr Li warned that "it is impossible for us to proceed with reform and expand the economy amid social upheaval". In a similarly cautious tone, Mr Li spoke against an overheated economy. He predicted a growth rate of 6 per cent, compared with 7 per cent last year. "We did not set the economic growth rate for this year as high as we might have, because we wanted to allow for unforeseen contingencies," he said.

Mr Li said prices had only risen an average of 3 per cent in the past year and would be limited to 6 per cent in the year ahead. He said that sharp inflation must be avoided.

He voiced his support for the Three Gorges dam, the \$10 billion (£5.8 billion) project which is a favourite with hardliners. It would dam the Yangtze river, creating the world's most powerful hydro-electric power project. The project was temporarily abandoned in 1989 because of opposition by parliamentarians on economic and environmental grounds. If the dam goes ahead, the homes and land of more than a million people will be flooded. Many critics are concerned at the prospect of relocating so many people.

In what appeared to be something of a concession, Mr Li said that the project should be approved in principle but that construction would only be started once China could better afford it.



Hand of comfort: David Levy, the Israeli foreign minister, holds the father of Zehava Zehavi at her funeral yesterday. She was among 28 people killed in Tuesday's bombing of the Israeli embassy in Buenos Aires.

Israelis pledge revenge

FROM RICHARD BEESTON IN JERUSALEM

ISRAEL yesterday buried the first of the victims of the Buenos Aires embassy bombing and made a graveside vow to hunt down their killers in a "war to the death".

In emotional scenes, which capped a week of violence against Israelis both at home and abroad, the coffins carrying Zehava Zehavi, aged 40, and Eliora Karmon, aged 39, were greeted with full honours when they arrived at Ben Gurion airport on board a private jet belonging to President Menem of Argentina.

"Eliora, Zehava, the Lord will avenge your spilled blood," said David Levy, the foreign minister. "This is the vow: our hand is outstretched in peace to those who believe in peace and dream of peace. And to those consumed by hatred, we have but one path - waging war on them to the death."

At a simple burial service for Zehava in the coastal town of Netanya, Benjamin Netanyahu, an Israeli minister of state, spoke for many Israelis when he told her family that "all of Israel bleeds, we all feel your pain".

Israel is expected to take retaliatory action once its security experts determine who was behind the attack. The Iranian-backed Islamic Jihad group in Beirut claimed it carried out the operation to avenge the killing by Israel of Sheikh Abbas Mousawi, the Hezbollah leader, last month.

● Gaza closest: All roads in and out of the Gaza Strip were closed in response to the attack on Tuesday by a Muslim fundamentalist from Gaza who killed two Israelis and wounded 19 when he went on the rampage in the Israeli town of Jaffa.

Bangladesh gets US aid for refugees

Karens foil Burmese attack

BY DAVID WATTS, DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT, AND OUR FOREIGN STAFF

THE plight of another 15,000 Burmese Muslim refugees pouring into Bangladesh over the past four days has moved the Bush administration to grant \$3 million (£1.7 million) in assistance to the victims of the Burmese junta. The new influx raises the number to more than 210,000 Muslims now in camps along the border in Bangladesh.

Begum Khaleda Zia, the Bangladesh prime minister, after a meeting with Mr Bush at the White House at which she heard of the new assistance, said: "I am very happy about these talks. President Bush was extremely kind." She was later due to fly to New York for talks with Boutros Boutros Ghali, the United Nations secretary-general.

As the prime minister was briefing the president in Washington, Burmese troops launched attacks against another Karen base near the Thai frontier, but the ethnic minority rebels blunted the assaults. The attack was the latest of a series on Karen rebel camps along the Thai-Burmese border in an intense Burmese offensive during the dry season.

Manerplaw, the headquarters of the Karen National Union, and Komora are among the besieged bases of the Karen, who are fighting for greater autonomy from the military government in Rangoon. Burmese troops rained hundreds of mortar shells on No Ta camp on Thursday afternoon before infantry units tried to break through the rebels' defensive line at sunset.

About 300 government soldiers and 200 guerrillas defending No Ta were locked in

close combat for hours before the government troops were forced to withdraw. Karen sources in Mae Sot said yesterday that about 50 Burmese soldiers who intruded into Thailand to attack Komora last weekend were still dug in on Thai soil in the village of Wang Kaeay.

The Thai military, which has clashed with the Burmese in recent days, said it was verifying the report and would act to push any intruding troops back. Early this week the Thais sent reinforcements and now have more than 1,000 soldiers and four 105mm howitzers in the area. Radio Rangoon reported that the Burmese election commission has ordered nine



more political parties to disband. The radio said that the commission took the action because the parties had not organised themselves properly and had failed to provide membership lists. Only 10 of the 235 political parties that registered for the 1990 general elections remain in existence. The commission has since declared the rest illegal. The National League for Democracy won the election, but the junta has refused to hand over power.

In Paris, Amnesty International called on Burma's rulers to halt the campaign of

terror and violence against Muslims that has caused thousands to flee the country. The human rights group, which recently sent a fact-finding team to interview Burmese refugees in Bangladesh, said the trip confirmed reports of widespread human rights abuses, including torture and murder.

Amnesty International's Paris office said the Burmese army has targeted the Muslim minority in western Burma. "Muslim men have been rounded up in large numbers and pressed into forced labour for the military, often as porters," the report said. "They are ill-fed and abused. Many are reported to have been beaten to death when they became too weak to carry their loads. Muslim women have been raped in their homes, others have been held in army barracks and repeatedly raped." More than 200,000 Muslims have fled Burma to Bangladesh since 1991 when the anti-Muslim campaign began, Amnesty International estimated.

In Rangoon, the authorities set up relief camps and distributed food last night to victims of a fire in a northern suburb that destroyed about 2,000 shanty homes and left 20,000 people homeless. The state-run Working People's Daily reported that two schools, a market and a co-operative store were also destroyed in the blaze.

The fire broke out in the kitchen of a boiled-beans vendor, the state radio reported earlier. It said the fire was caused by negligence. Most of the houses in the area are made of bamboo with thatch roofs.

Leading article, page 15

Land bill troubles farmers

FROM JAN RAATH IN HARARE

WHITE farmers have reacted cautiously to the jubilant passing of legislation in the Zimbabwean parliament this week enabling land owned by them to be turned over to black peasant farmers.

Alan Burl, the president of the Commercial Farmers' Union, which represents the 4,600-strong white farming community, said at a private dinner attended by several hundred union members and Witness Mangwende, the minister of lands, that their only option was to work hard to ensure that the land acquisition bill was properly and fairly implemented. Mr Burl was at pains to underline the government's previous promises of fair acquisition of farms and an orderly programme of resettlement that would not disrupt the highly productive sector.

Mr Mangwende warmly applauded what he called Mr Burl's "positive response". David Hasluck, the director of the farmers' union, was however, less enthusiastic. He said that despite last-minute amendments inserted by the government after international pressure, there were no clear guarantees of fair compensation nor clear access to the courts to dispute unfair compensation.

● Policemen arrested: Eddison Shiri, the deputy chief of Zimbabwe's secret police, was arrested in connection with the disappearance of his former girlfriend, officials said yesterday. Two other men are already under arrest in connection with the suspected abduction of Rashida Guzha two years ago. (AFP)

Mandela turns on de Klerk over growing train violence

FROM GAVIN BELL IN CAPE TOWN

EUPHORIA over the result of South Africa's white referendum has given way to alarm over the mounting death toll in the incontinent civil war in black townships.

Commuter trains running between Johannesburg and the satellite shanty towns have become a focus of the bloody conflict between supporters of the African National Congress and the Inkatha Freedom party, which spread from Natal to the Transvaal last year. Police said five people had been killed and 22 seriously injured by gangs riding the trains in the rush hour.

In one incident, three Zulu-speaking men armed with handguns boarded a train and began questioning Xhosa-speaking passengers about their political affiliations. Panic ensued, and at least three people were badly injured when they leapt from the moving train.

Most attacks are attributed by witnesses to supporters of Inkatha, which is led by Chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi. The

latest incidents brought the death toll to 300 since the referendum, was called a month ago.

Nelson Mandela, the president of the ANC, responded yesterday with a scathing attack on the government and its security forces. Addressing businessmen in Cape Town, Mr Mandela said: "It is quite clear the security forces are involved at the highest level." Accusing President de Klerk of not doing enough to halt the violence, he said that either the ruling National party had lost control of the security forces, "or the security forces are doing exactly what the National party wants them to do". The prompt installation of an interim, multiracial government was the only means of bringing the security forces under control and curbing the violence, he said.

Hernus Kriel, the minister for law and order, belatedly announced a ban on the carrying of dangerous weapons on trains. A ministry spokesman said police would do everything they could to enforce the prohibition, and appealed for co-operation from commuters. Armed police who made a rare search of a commuter train last week were cheered by passengers when they confiscated guns, clubs and knives.

Meanwhile, Eugene Terre Blanche, the leader of the paramilitary Afrikaner Resistance Movement, said his private army was preparing for a race war. Claiming this "victory" commando had 5,000 men, he said: "We are immediately stepping up our defence plans for the coming bloody revolution."

The government has called on the ANC to disband its military wing, Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK). However, Mr Mandela said: "The South African Defence Force (SADF) is a private army of the National party. If they want us to dismantle MK, they must take the initiative and dismantle the SADF." But neither step is likely until joint control of the security establishment leads to an integration of the two forces.

Malawi exiles forge alliance

BY JAN RAATH

PROSPECTS for change in Malawi, one of the last countries in Africa to be affected by democratic upheaval, grew yesterday with a gathering in neighbouring Zambia of exiles and dissidents seeking to forge political union.

Opening the meeting in Lusaka, Roger Chongwe, Zambia's justice minister, said: "Political liberation will come to [Malawi] earlier than most of us anticipate." The

60 Malawians had assembled to discuss unity among the exiled Malawian movements and individuals opposed to the rule of President Banda. This month in Malawi there was unprecedented criticism by the country's Roman Catholic bishops, who called for political reform and an end to one-party rule by Dr Banda's Malawi Congress party. There was also a student demonstration.

At the three-day meeting in Lusaka, drawing together Malawian political figures from Europe, America and Africa, as well as from inside Malawi, Chilufwa Chihana, a trade unionist, called for a "national conference of democratic forces". He said: "We must establish inside Malawi an organisational structure to carry forward all our demands for democracy." It would "seek an end to one-party, one-man dictatorship, and ultimately free and fair elections in which any political party which might emerge can participate."

Mr Chihana arrived in Lusaka about two weeks ago from relative obscurity in the Malawian capital, Lilongwe, where he runs the office of a southern African trade union council. In Zambia, he has spoken out against Dr Banda, and Western diplomats have told him that a warrant for his arrest has been issued. Mr Chihana, who was held for six years without trial in the 1970s, says he will return to Lilongwe next week and was "prepared to die for the right to express myself".

Mr Chihana's first brush with Dr Banda came just before independence in 1964, when he was forced to flee the country after being beaten up by Malawi Congress party supporters for his criticism of the party as secretary-general of Malawi's trade union movement.

MAURITIUS NOTEBOOK by Eve-Ann Prentice

Bribes help to keep unschooled drivers on the roads

Blind faith seems to be the guiding principle of many drivers in Mauritius. The slow crawl of buses and lorries coughing their way along the rutted and twisted single carriageways is of little impediment to the more impatient car drivers who veer from behind them to overtake on blind bends and brows of hills with hair-raising abandon.

There are, though, some cars which stutter even more slowly than the buses between the fields of sugar cane. These nearly always belong to motorists who have bought their driving licences rather than go

through the risky business of taking a test.

Even people who do not know the accelerator from the brake pedal can buy a driving licence with back-handers to the right people. These are usually driving school instructors who, it is widely reported, share the bribes with some of the officials who issue the permits. Costs vary between 600 rupees (£22) for a moped to 6,000 rupees for a commercial vehicle.

The practice is so well accepted on the island that a senior local executive said: "This is not a problem, because people who do not

know how to drive properly go more slowly - they are more careful, so it makes for safer driving."

The illegal, though widely accepted, practice is likely to be curbed soon. Cyril Morvan, the new police commissioner on the island, which became a republic last week, has promised to try to improve road safety in an attempt to reduce casualties.

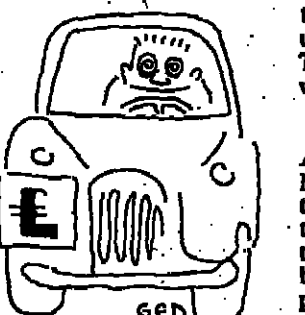
The latest statistics from police headquarters are for 1986. These show that 5,774 people were involved in accidents that year and 103 died. The population is just over one million. One of

the first casualties after the republic's birth involved an Indian High Commission car returning from the air-

port at the weekend after seeing off P.V. Narasimha Rao, the Indian prime minister, who was guest of honour at the national celebrations. The car plunged through a ditch and ended up crumpled in a cane field. The driver and a diplomat were injured.

After waiting 24 years since independence, Mauritius has to wait an extra 15 minutes before seeing the republican flag raised for the first time. It should have been raised at noon but displays of pomp and solidarity at the Champs de Mars race track at Port Louis, the capital, started late because traffic delayed Sir Anerood Jugnauth, the prime minister and other dignitaries.

Police chiefs gesticulated impatiently at the entourage as the important moment loomed. Sir Victor Glover, the chief justice, solemnised the oath taken by Sir Veerasamy Ringadoo, the new president. The last five salutes of a 31-gun salute were fired almost simultaneously. But when noon arrived the police were just beginning their parade ground display, and no one seemed to consider asking them to postpone it.



Mitterrand's fascist Frankenstein's monster slips its chain



Le Pen: campaign with one winning policy

RIVAL bodies of riot police were deployed last night on Paris's Left Bank, two days before polling in France's regional elections: the *gendarmes mobiles* for the Boulevard Saint Michel and the CRS for the Boulevard Saint Germain. It was an appropriate sight at the end of a campaign which has involved a nostalgic trip through the nation's history.

The results of tomorrow's poll are expected to deal a heavy blow to the governing Socialist party, partly as a conventional protest against those who have ruled France for nine of the past 11 years, and partly also as a result of mismanagement of the Socialist party's campaign.

The Socialist campaign has been almost entirely aimed at the figure of Jean-Marie Le Pen, president of the National Front. In 1985 in a

From a shabby march in 1985 to leading a party that even its opponents want to be successful. Patrick Marnham in Paris traces the rise and rise of Le Pen

street in Lyons there was a march of the National Front. They were shuffling along in the rain, chanting their depressing slogan, *La France aux Français*.

There were about 50 of them. In their shabby leather jackets and middle-aged spreads, they resembled a bunch of out-of-work night-club bouncers. They glared around but the overall effect was more pathetic than menacing. However, other wise heads could already see the potential in the National Front and today the movement receives more attention in France from politicians

and the media than any other. The regional election campaign has been its greatest triumph yet.

A French National Front has only one winning policy: it is savagely opposed to North African immigration. For the rest it has a patchwork of policies, some of which seem strangely familiar to British eyes. They include suppression of the wealth tax, an increase in value-added tax, abolition of the shorter (39-hour) working week and a minimum industrial wage, and privatisation of the banks, Renault and Air France. France in 1992 is not

Britain in 1979, and even the most optimistic polls give the National Front no more than 35 per cent of the vote in selective regions such as Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur. Unless there is a late movement in opinion, the National Front will fail to win even this region, and in regions such as the Auvergne it is expected to come bottom of the poll with 7 per cent, well behind the Communists and both the official and unofficial Green parties. The publicity the National Front receives is not a reflection of its importance but of the fact that many of its most implacable opponents secretly want this party to succeed.

At a difficult time for socialism, the apparent resurgence of the "extreme right" is a godsend for the French government. President Mitterrand realised its potential

usefulness in 1986 when he introduced proportional representation in regional and legislative elections, which ensured the National Front won a broad base of support. Then, by successfully denouncing right-wing politicians who made electoral alliances with the National Front as "fascist sympathisers", the president weakened the two right-wing parties (the UDF and the Gaullist RPR) and nullified their built-in majority.

At the start of the regional election campaign — which last night was marred by violence when a National Front security guard shot and wounded an anti-fascist demonstrator in Nice — President Mitterrand's favourite tactic was wheeled out for another airing. A march of 50,000 intellectuals and trade unionists moved through Paris. Its

sole purpose was to launch a "Republican Front" to defeat the National Front but this time the tactic has proved to be a disaster for the Socialists.

In the Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur region, where M. Le Pen is now expected to do so well, President Mitterrand overruled the local Socialists and entrusted the "Republican Front" to Bernard Tapie, the colourful chairman of the Olympique Marseilles football club and a businessman who bears some resemblance to the late Robert Maxwell.

M. Tapie is hugely ambitious but politically inexperienced. His most obvious qualification for fighting M. Le Pen is that he frequently uses an even coarser vocabulary. Tapie launched his own list of candidates in the southern region and christened it "Southern Energy". The Tapie list has done badly.

In the Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur region the Republican Front under M. Tapie's leadership has turned into a fiasco and M. Le Pen can hardly believe his luck. The worse news for President Mitterrand is that — as a result of M. Tapie's failure — voters in the south, including Socialist voters who want to defeat the National Front, will now have to vote for the traditional right.

It has taken a painfully long time for the Socialists to realise that their "near-fascist" robot is out of control. President Mitterrand, trying to give an impression of remoteness, has fallen silent. Perhaps the cruellest remark of the campaign was made by his biographer, Franz-Olivier Giesbert, who described him as "resembling a man who is being crucified in his armchair."

Democrats go to rescue of Yeltsin reforms

FROM MARY DEJEVSKY IN MOSCOW

SOME of the darkest horses in Russian politics, among them former Gorbachev loyalists, have founded a "citizens' initiative" to counter the increasing attacks on Russia's radical government.

Their immediate aim is to prevent next month's meeting of the full Russian parliament, the Congress of People's Deputies, from approving a motion of no confidence in government ministers and forcing the removal of Yegor Gaidar, the reform supreme and first deputy prime minister.

Some believe that the group — which claims the support of several thousand people — may also form the basis for a "constituent assembly" to approve the new Russian constitution and sanction further and deeper reforms. Such an assembly would bypass Russia's standing parliament, the supreme soviet, and it has attracted hostility in the parliamentary lobbies on that score.

Although the new group presents itself as a grassroots initiative, the composition of the steering committee suggests a carefully planned

move to rescue the beleaguered government. Key members include Aleksandr Yakovlev, Mr Gorbachev's former political adviser and now deputy chairman of the Gorbachev Fund, and Anatoli Volynsky, the Gorbachevite former head of the Scientific Industrial League, who co-ordinated plans for industrial restructuring and now falls a similar role in Russia.

Mr Volynsky and his deputy, Aleksandr Vladimirov, who is also a member of the steering committee, have close ties with the powerful military industries. Other influential figures are Vladimir Iysenko, one of the founder members of the Democratic Platform, the first democratic splinter from the Communist party, who now heads the Republican party, several reform-minded members of the drafting commission for the new Russian constitution, and Father Gleb Yakunin, a former dissident and now a radical Russian MP.

A notable absentee is Anatoli Sobchak, the mayor of St Petersburg, who is reported to be drafting a rival Russian constitution. Mr Sobchak was invited by the group for discussions, but failed to turn up. He has increasingly distanced himself from the radical Russian government, predicting its imminent downfall, and some believe he has national ambitions of his own and is biding his time.

According to Mr Iysenko, the citizens' initiative was a response to recent remarks by President Yeltsin about the effect of disunity in the Russian democratic movement. The fragmentation of the democrats into several factions, he had warned, could mean defeat for reform in Russia. The group plans to hold a series of discussion meetings over the next two weeks and a "citizens' assembly" in Moscow on April 4, two days before the opening of the Russian congress. Mr Yeltsin responded favourably to an invitation to speak.

Members of the group admitted yesterday that their assembly was deliberately timed to put pressure on the Russian congress by "showing where many public groups stand". They denied, however, that they had any thoughts of forming a constituent assembly or bypassing parliament, although their agenda duplicates the congress agenda by including questions relating to the Russian state structure and the new constitution.

Kiev division, page 18

Georgian captives released

Zugdidi: Supporters of Zviad Gamsakhurdia, the deposed president, in western Georgia have begun handing over hostages they took during their revolt last week against the government of Eduard Shevardnadze (Anatoli Lieven writes).

Government troops have begun to withdraw from the Mingrelia region, leaving it in rebel hands. According to the Tbilisi government, 40 hostages, including George Kakalashvili, commander of the national guard in western Georgia, were freed. Another ten, including Besik Kutaladze, the deputy defence minister, remain captive.

Kohl to talk to Bush on Gatt

Bonn: Helmut Kohl, the German chancellor, is meeting President Bush in America to try to break the deadlock on the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade talks, bogged down by disagreement between America and the European Community over farming subsidies (Patrick Moser writes).

Both leaders are expected to make concessions, but the serious sticking point over France's refusal to cut farm subsidies is likely to remain, although Germany may be moving away from its support of France's stand.

Arms raid

Berlin: The German armaments giant, MBB, and a machine-tools maker, have been raided on suspicion that they sold weapons illegally to Iraq in collusion with a former East German agency. The shipments are reported to have helped build the chemical weapons plant at Mosul, northern Iraq. (AFP)

Light verse

Amsterdam: Lamp-posts in the central square of Zoetermeer, near The Hague, are being fitted with compact disc devices featuring the work of national poets, read out at the touch of a button. (Reuter)



Masked parade: Lagerfeld's designs for his autumn ready-to-wear collection, presented in Paris yesterday, include a leather jacket and skirt, with tiny mask, left, and an African mask-style hat, worn with a brown satin dress embroidered horizontally and vertically

Lagerfeld cuts the gimmicks

FROM LIZ SMITH, FASHION EDITOR, IN PARIS

KARL Lagerfeld, the German-born fashion designer they call Kaiser Karl, was on parade in Paris yesterday exuding all the creative confidence of a designer on a roll. He has dispensed with his gimmicks. All the jokey accessories — clumpy shoes, crazy jewellery, zig-zag hemlines — were cleared away to show off the sharp-scissored seaming of the skinny jackets and stretchy long skirts in his own-label line.

Lagerfeld is a restless fashion dynamo. He commutes constantly between Paris (where he has revived the fortunes of the Chanel fashion house in his decade as design director), Rome (where he works for Fendi) and Hamburg from where he directs his lower-priced KL collection.

Customers of his sharply chiselled modernist style in London were shocked when the two Lagerfeld shops, in Bond Street and Knightsbridge, closed earlier this month when the franchise company went into liquidation. Yesterday it was announced that the Bond Street shop would be reopening, under new franchise, in April.

Defiant Tatars go ahead with vote

FROM BRUCE CLARK IN KAZAN

RESIDENTS of Tatarstan, the heartland of Russia's strongest Muslim minority and a powerhouse of heavy industry, go to the polls today in a plebiscite on self-rule that is being held in defiance of President Yeltsin and Moscow's highest court.

The prospect of an independent Tatar state, dominated by the nations that held sway over the newly Christianised Slavs during the Middle Ages, has struck a note of atavistic terror among Russians who fear that their republic could follow the Soviet Union down the path of disintegration.

The result of the poll is expected to be finely balanced between supporters and opponents of making Tatarstan a "sovereign state" that is entitled to sign treaties with Russia and other countries on a basis of equality. Most observers are predicting a slim majority for the "yes" camp, although its supporters say they cannot predict the effects of a propaganda campaign for a "no" vote which they accused shadowy Russian interests of financing.

Opponents of the referendum, both in Moscow and the local capital of Kazan, alleged that the secret purpose of the vaguely worded question is to pave the way for a break with Russia, something which the clear majority of the territory's 3.5 million residents opposes.

Mintimer Shaimiev, the president of Tatarstan and a former communist who is under pressure from a newly formed shadow parliament which advocates a strident version of nationalism, denies that he is planning outright secession from Russia. About 18 of the 20 "mini-republics" lying inside Russian territory have just signed a new federal treaty defining their relations with Moscow; the exceptions are Tatarstan and the fiercely Muslim state of Chechnya-Ingushetia in the Caucasus mountains.

Opponents of today's referendum, who staged an angry walkout from an eve-of-poll debate in the local parliament, argue that whatever the present leadership's intentions a "yes" vote would provide a clear legal basis for breaking with Russia at a future date.

Rural voters hold key to Albania poll

Albania's opposition Democrats have ruled out another coalition, hoping for outright victory in tomorrow's election. Anne McElvoy reports from Tirana

ALBANIANS go to the polls tomorrow with the opposition Albanian Democratic party modestly confident of securing an absolute majority they need to replace the Socialists in power.

The party, led by Sari Berisha, a heart surgeon and founder member of the 1990 opposition movement, has been steadily gaining momentum at rallies throughout the country and looks the more organised of the two main contenders.

But success in the towns may be tempered by the more conservative voting intentions of rural areas. An opinion poll conducted by the Democrats predicted that it would gain a 54 per cent share of the vote — short of initial expectations of a runaway victory in the face of the country's economic plight.

Diplomatic sources in Tirana said that it was impossible to gauge the strength of the two parties in outlying areas. "There seems to be a swing

towards the Democrats in the past few days, but we do not underestimate the lure of familiarity of the Socialists to the peasants," an envoy said.

Closing his campaign at a mass rally last night, Dr Berisha said: "We are the strongest party in Albania. We may have only existed for a short time but we were present in the heads of Albanians for many years in the form of the will to freedom."

He attracted a crowd of 30,000 in the blighted steel town of Elbasan and 60,000 in Shkoder, the scene of recent food riots.

The Democrats gained a third of the vote in the elections of March 1991 but complained that they had not been allowed time to prepare themselves for the first free elections after their foundation in December 1990 and that Ramiz Alia, the country's president and a former communist, had displayed a preference for the Socialists. They left the coalition government after five months.

Dr Berisha has ruled out a second coalition government with the Socialists so that Albania may face yet another election if neither party gains an absolute victory tomorrow.

His party has won over many of the country's urban population anxious to escape the communist legacy. But two-thirds of Albania's three million people live in the underdeveloped countryside.

Fatos Nano, the Socialist leader, said yesterday: "It would be wrong to write us off. We offer the peasants security and an absolute promise that we will not expropriate their land — something the Democrats are vague about." The Socialists are, however, tarnished by association with the former Stalinist regime.

● Athens: Thousands of ethnic Greeks are crossing the border into Albania to vote for the Union of Human Rights party which represented the Greek minority.

Maverick rides into US race

FROM JAMIE DETTMER IN WASHINGTON

THE eccentric Texan billionaire, H. Ross Perot, one of the richest men in America, is laying the foundations for joining the presidential race as an independent candidate.

The outspoken entrepreneur, who has railed against intrusive government and incompetent administration since selling his main business in 1984, has hinted for weeks that he might run.

Mr Perot let slip late on Thursday that he would soon name "someone who does more than go to funerals and play golf" as a running mate. It has now emerged that an election committee has rented an office near the White House and that volunteers are already staffing 100 telephone lines in his Dallas office.

Mr Perot, the rags-to-riches son of a horse trader, has hit out against lack of leadership in America today. He has appeared on national television and made policy speeches which defy partisan labels. Earlier this week, he grabbed media attention with a speech to the press in Washington. "In plain Texas talk, it's time to take out the trash and clean out the barn," he said.

He founded Dallas-based Electronic Data Systems on a shoe-string in 1962 and quickly made millions. He sold the business in 1984 to General Motors for \$2.4 billion (£1.4 billion).

In 1979, he hired commandos and participated in a raid in Iran to free two of his employees who were being held as hostages, a feat that later formed the plot for Ken Follet's thriller *On Wings of Eagles*.

Yesterday he said he would run if supporters can put his name on presidential ballots in every state. "I have to. If someone as picked as I am is not willing to pick up a shovel and clean out the barn, who will?"

Scholarly Clinton, page 14

TV 'trial' confronts Keating

Paul Keating, the Australian prime minister and former treasurer, will go on "trial" on television on Monday, accused of murdering the Australian economy. The "prosecutor" will be David Lange, New Zealand's former prime minister. The judge will be Sir John Starke, who ordered Australia's last hanging in 1967. The accused will not appear, but a not guilty plea has been recorded.

William Kennedy Smith will begin his medical residency at the University of New Mexico in June, a year after he was to have started the course and six months after being acquitted of rape. Mr Smith graduated from Georgetown University Medical School last year. The delay was caused by the trial.

Today's musicians want instant stardom and record companies want quick fixes, said Don McLean, who wrote the 1970s hit *American Pie*. The result, he said, was a chain of one-hit wonders. "It has left us with hundreds of songs that nobody is going to remember 20 years from now."

Oliver Stone is to visit Peking in May for discussions about making a film about Mao Tse-tung. "I'm open to the possibility but not committed yet," Stone said. China has never co-operated in a foreign production on Mao, but the *China Daily* said negotiations seeking permission for the project were well advanced.

The chart-topping pop group *Shakespears Sister* had to pull out of a gig when the singer Marcella Detroit found herself lost for words. She went down with laryngitis minutes before the band were due on stage for a concert at Newcastle Polytechnic. Disappointed fans are expected to be offered tickets when the band play at Newcastle's City Hall in May.

Yorks' split divides Spanish royalists

FROM FRANK SMITH IN MADRID

News that the Duke and Duchess of York are to separate is certain to strengthen the hand of those traditionalists who have argued that the liaison between Prince Felipe de Bourbon, the heir to the Spanish throne, and Isabel Sartorius, the commoner with whom he is said to be deeply in love, should not lead to their marriage.

Since the Spanish press first published news of the romance, aged 24, and his girlfriend, aged 27, two and a half years ago, there have been persistent rumours that the royal household, particularly Queen Sofia, is "not amused". Reports that the prince was contemplating giving up the throne for the girl he loves fuelled the

debate as to whether such a step — should it come to it — should be necessary.

That is when comparisons between the Spanish and British royal families first became a talking point. Both opponents and supporters of the royal romance looked to Britain for examples to strengthen their case. "The Prince of Wales married a commoner — so why shouldn't our royal heir?" went one argument. "We do not want another Mrs Simpson here," went another. "And now," said Amanda de Miguel, an author and sociologist, "there will be those who say: 'What do you expect when a prince marries a commoner?'"

But Señor de Miguel said the parallels between the two families can be carried



Sartorius: girlfriend of Prince Felipe of Spain

too far. The Spanish royals are not wealthy; they have no great amounts of land, limited money, there is no civil list as in Britain and they pay their taxes.

"They have always been as

poor as church mice," Señor de Miguel said. And although in the constitution the monarchy is referred to as the crown, the Madrid-based sociologist pointed out that this is somewhat ridiculous: "because in Spain there is no coronation and no crown."

Señor de Miguel said: "What the Spanish find sympathetic about this liaison, about Prince Felipe and Isabel Sartorius, is that it appears to be a real romance. Maybe it is because we are a romantic people."

But as all good sociologists know, marriages for love often end up in the divorce courts.

Royal separation, page 3

Clifford Longley

Divorced royalty should be free to remarry

The preamble to the Royal Marriages Act of 1772 declares as a self-evident truth that "marriages in the royal family are of the highest importance to the state". It could be the motto of the paparazzi who have been to the fore this last week, although perhaps substituting "our readers" for "the state". This is the measure of the importance of royal marriages today. They have become furniture in the royal soap-opera, little more. What they evidently do not supply (no longer, if ever) is an example to the nation of the virtues of Christian family life.

When David Williamson, the co-editor of *Debut*, wrote to *The Times* in 1987 to ask if the time had come to replace the Royal Marriages Act by a law more up to date, he added: "...if indeed such an act is deemed necessary". In 215 years the importance of royal marriages to the state has become highly questionable. The royal family appears to be in painful need, so to speak, of "disestablishment".

The present laws offer at least two obstacles to happy royal marriages. The 1772 act forbids members of the royal family marrying without permission of the monarch. Although there are no special legal obstacles to their separation and divorce, probably because divorce is of more recent institution, there are serious difficulties if divorced royalty wished to remarry. Those to whom the 1772 act applies need to marry in the Church of England, because the law allowing marriage by civil registrar excludes royalty (at least in England and Wales). But the regulations of the Church of England forbid the remarriage of divorcees in church.

Such regulations are not strictly binding in law, as Anglican clergy have a statutory right to marry whoever they like. But it is unlikely that the Queen, who takes her office as Supreme Governor of the Church of England seriously, would sanction a marriage in church in defiance of the Act of Convocation on divorce, passed in 1957.

This declared what is still official church policy: "That in order to maintain the principle of lifelong obligation which is inherent in every legally contracted marriage and is expressed in the plainest terms in the Marriage Service, the church should not allow the use of that service in the case of anyone who has a former spouse living."

Monarchs have sanctioned marriages of members of the royal family to divorced persons, but not in England. Apart from the Duke of Windsor—whose marriage in Paris to a divorcee was agreed under the 1772 act by his brother, George VI—the present Queen allowed the Earl of St Andrews (elder son of the Duke of Kent) to marry a (lapsed) Roman Catholic divorcee in an Edinburgh register office in 1988.

One component, therefore, in any new Royal Marriages Act should be the lifting of the need for the monarch's permission; another, to allow royalty to have English and Welsh register office weddings, so they can remarry after divorce as easily as the rest of the citizenry. But a third issue is raised by the marriage of the Prince Michael of Kent to Princess Michael who is also a Roman Catholic.

Under the 1700 Act of Settlement (sometimes cited as 1701) any member of the royal family who "is, or shall be reconciled to or shall hold communion with the see or church of Rome or shall profess the popish religion or shall marry a papist" shall, for succession purposes, be treated "as if said person were naturally dead".

In 1992 lifting the ban on the monarch being a Roman Catholic would hardly restart the Gordon riots, but would none the less raise awkward questions for the establishment of the Church of England.

When the Queen's sons began to reach eligibility in the 1960s there was some concern in court circles at the shortage of suitable Protestant princesses in Europe. Because of the 1700 Act Catholic princesses were regarded as out of bounds, though princesses are trained in royalty from birth and know, it was said, "how to behave".

The other obvious source for marriage partners for royalty, the Sloane Ranger or Hoorary Henry offspring of the English titled and landed gentry, were looked down on by a certain sort of courtier as "not quite suitable". But if marriages in the royal family no longer have either exemplary or constitutional significance, there is no longer any justification for restricting royalty's freedom to couple or uncouple as it pleases.

Poor economic figures have put the Tory campaign on the defensive, writes Peter Riddell

Labour ahead on points

RIDDELL ON THE ELECTION

point or two to 16 or 17 per cent. But there is a lot of fluidity.

How does this campaign differ from previous ones? The parties have prepared all the details to minimise risk of the unforeseen. Each party has its campaign tune (uniformly dreadful), its carefully designed sets and its group of television spokesmen so that there is no room for spontaneity or mavericks. We will hear little of Dennis Skinner or Nicholas Budgen over the next three weeks. Consequently, so far there have been no memorable remarks or gaffes. The sole interest has been the broadcast featuring

Mr Major's return to Brixton.

Which party has had the best campaign so far? Labour has made a stronger start. Its shadow budget on Monday, manifested on Wednesday, and first television election broadcast on Thursday all sounded positive. They conveyed a clear message that a big majority of families would gain from the party's proposals that more money would be spent on health, education and training (all areas favoured by the public) and that the party would do something about the recession. The party has appeared like a government in waiting: John Smith was billed as Labour's chancellor, not shadow chancellor, in Thursday's broadcast.

By contrast, the Tories have sounded negative. Faced by bad industrial output and unemployment figures, they have

been on the defensive about the economy. They have also concentrated on attacking Labour's tax plans, especially the large losses for many on middle incomes. The Tories' own Budget has had little impact and, while its manifesto contained many ideas, particularly on extending ownership, it failed to project a clear Conservative agenda.

How are the leaders performing? Mr Major has retained his big margin of personal popularity over the opposition leaders, and the Tories have put him at the centre of their campaign. Neil Kinnock's public appearances are tightly controlled and he has shown his strengths as a stirring platform orator. Paddy Ashdown, bearing much of the burden, has shown energy, as well as the advantage of having only a single leader rather than

the divisions of the dual leadership of the old Alliance.

How worried are the Tories? Publicly, Tory officials claim always to have thought it would take a week or so for their counterattack against Labour's tax plans to change opinion. They point to a more aggressive approach over the past two days. Privately, some jitteriness is evident: there are already rumours of discontent in the Tory press and among some Thatcherites. If the polls tomorrow and early next week show that Labour is pulling ahead, Conservative Central Office is likely to come under fire with demands for changes.

Who is going to win? The electorate has little enthusiasm for either of the main parties and little faith in their ability to get Britain out of recession. So far Labour's "time for a change" appeal has made more impact than the Tories' warnings against Labour. Mr Major still has to do to persuade wavering Tories that his party deserves a fourth term.

No Rhodes scholar in 99 years has come close to the White House—until now, Charles Bremner says

He is watching from some celestial verandah, sun-downer in hand, Cecil Rhodes may be allowing himself a little satisfaction. For the first time in the 99 years since the old imperialist endowed his scholarships to give high achievers from the colonies, America and Germany the benefit of an Oxford education, one of his protégés has reached striking distance of the American presidency.

Bill Clinton, a scholar of 1968-70, will, if he wins the Democratic nomination, be the first Oxonian candidate. He will bring with him an outlook honed by his tutors at University College and a brains trust of his contemporaries, a force which *The Wall Street Journal* has dubbed his "patriot missile". These include Robert Reich, the media's favourite professor at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government; George Stephanopoulos, his campaign manager; Michael Mandelbaum, a national security expert; as well as a prominent journalist or two and a judge. Only once before, when John Kennedy picked Dean Rusk, the Secretary of State, and a batch of other Rhodesmen for his team of the best and the brightest, has such an Oxford "mafia" had its hands near the levers of American power. In an oft-told anecdote, Rusk noted their preponderance at a White House meeting and quipped: "Just as I thought, Harvard gets the credit and Oxford does the work."

The rise of "Slick Willie" Clinton of Arkansas, has revived some old polemics about America's Oxonians and in particular about the Rhodes system which dominates them. For generations, America has been in two minds about "Oxford College in England": the admirer of Jay Gatsby, the Trinity impostor, called it.

A stint among the dreaming spires is seen either as proof of

ultimate polish or hopeless thrall to Anglophile snobbery. On the admiring side, Jimmy Carter often lamented his sense of failure over missing out on a Rhodes. In the pre-war years, Robert McCormick, the intransigent owner of the *Chicago Tribune*, waged an anti-Oxford campaign that kept Rhodes types out of midwestern politics. That old animosity has faded, as was shown this week when Mel Reynolds, a Rhodes man, ousted a sitting congressman for the Democratic nomination in a safe Chicago seat.

Some 2,000 former Yanks at Oxford can be found throughout the upper echelons of American life, many of them doctors, lawyers, administrators and publishers. The current notables include five senators, two supreme court judges, three state governors, several congressmen and a battery of ambassadors. William Fulbright, the former senator, scholar and mentor to Mr Clinton, is to toast the Queen at next month's "Boat Race" dinner in Washington.

As a measure of their clout, American Oxonians have lately forked out \$44 million to the Oxford fund-raising effort. Cambridge, lacking the Oxford aura and the immense caches of Rhodesmen, has received a smaller sum. As Frank Sievers, chairman of the Washington Oxford-Cambridge committee and spokesman for the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, puts it: Americans go to Cambridge for study but to Oxford for "improving themselves".

However, Mr Sievers, like other Oxonians, laughs off talk of a *casa nostra* of former Yanks at Oxford. They may see themselves as "a sort of surrogate aristocracy", as one put it, but they are not a power elite such as the British old-boy establishment. One eminent Oxonian says the two years at Oxford, in which scholars take an accelerated version of the



Cecil Rhodes: his scholars have been typecast as smooth courtiers, not the stuff of presidents

bachelor's degree, tends to add to the networks they have already established at their first, usually Ivy League, universities. Mr Clinton's Oxford years, who so effectively squelched the media damage from those early questions about his character, are complemented by other FOBs, or Friends of Bill, acquired during his time at Georgetown University and Yale Law School.

Indeed, the failure so far of

any of the 3,000 or so Rhodesmen or women to reach the pinnacle of American power is sometimes taken as proof that the scheme has not lived up to Rhodes's vision of a breeding ground for future leaders. With its emphasis on popular all-rounders who are as handy with an oar as a card-index, the Rhodes system tends to promote young people "with a brilliant future behind them", as the old saw goes. These are smooth

operators rather than the iconoclasts and mavericks who break through as presidents, chief executives and generals. As born courtiers and appointees, Rhodesmen make ideal ambassadors, not presidential candidates, the critics say.

Mr Clinton may prove the exception to the wisdom, but some are already using it to nail him. Michael Kinsley, an editor of *The New Republic*, television commentator and Magdalen

man of the early 1970s, has diagnosed in Mr Clinton the classic Oxonian mentality of "slick ambition and earnest, almost naive idealism". These positively oozed, says Mr Kinsley, from the young Clinton's now infamous letter from Oxford, in which he agonised over avoiding the military draft to Vietnam and the need to maintain "political viability".

The "ravenous need for approval" for which Mr Kinsley skewers his fellows has been a matter of some jest at Oxford since the earliest days. One of the funniest portraits can be found in the person of Abimelech V. Over of Trinity, the verbose American who appears in *Zuleika Dobson*. Max Beerbohm's glorious satire of 1911. Over, writes Beerbohm, was a model of American Rhodes borer, "with their splendid native gift of oratory and their modest desire to please".

For decades, this haughty native view has stung the American scholars, some of whom have been ungrateful enough to question the value of exile in that damp and draughty city of bad food and silly rituals. Mr Stephanopoulos, a Balliol man, recalled a saying for the behaviour of English fellow students when they passed on the street: "Bird on a tree". When they saw an American coming, they would turn their attention to a tree. James Fallows, the Washington editor of *The Atlantic Monthly* and expert on Japan, describes his time at Queen's in the early 1970s as a "long ritual humiliation" and he still muses about the irony of listening to his tutor conveying superior British ideas about economics while strikes left the room unheated.

The Rhodes system does, however, breed civilised moderation. Messrs Fallows and Kinsley, both senior members of the American chattering classes, are quick to stress their underlying affection for Britain. This sentiment, shared by the Oxonians around the *Arkansas* governor, should prove a precious asset for the winning "special relationship" should the Democrats win the White House in November.



...and moreover

PHILIP HOWARD

The S-word is studiously avoided in the Labour party's manifesto. In that eruption of verbosity, there is room for dozens of references to caring, community, common-sense, and other words that are deemed to have an encouraging sound by the politico-linguistic witch doctors. Our attention is drawn to the curious incident of socialism in the manifesto. It is not mentioned. That is the curious incident.

The way that socialism has become a non-word is a local phenomenon. On Thursday the Prime Minister of Bulgaria wrote to *The Times* pointing out that the former Bulgarian Communist Party now operates under the name of Socialist. In the see-saw of language, socialism is on the up in the former satellites of the Soviet empire, while it is so down in the UK that our native socialist party dares not speak its name. In the United States, homeland of individualism, socialism has always been a highly charged negative word, carrying such sibilant scorn as scum and sodomite. In many countries of continental Europe, socialism (particularly with the suffix of democracy) is a highly respectable and rather self-satisfied epithet. This shows that socialism is one of the most volatile and contentious value words.

In language there is nothing either good or bad, but thinking makes it so. Socialism started its lexical career as a blameless and praiseworthy word. It is descended from the Latin word for

a chum. It was ruined when it was taken up by the arguing classes in the early 19th century and split into two broad streams of meaning, with numerous local tributaries. The first meaning was the simplest: to describe society as the system of living together rather than as anchorites. A social reformer was somebody who wanted to reform the way we live together. But in political philosophy socialism was given a second specialised meaning, explicitly contrasted with individualist and capitalist theories of society. The first and plain kind of socialism aimed to extend social justice, develop liberal values, end privileges and inequalities, and generally improve society. The second sharper jargon use of socialism was explicitly contrasted with industrial capitalism and the system of wage-labour.

This narrow version of socialism thought that a capitalist society and private ownership of the means of production prevented the creation of a just social order. In particular, this kind of socialism said that social justice would not come until a society based on private property and the market was replaced by one based on social ownership and control. It was a utopian ideal, invented by intellectuals who never had to buy a bath plug, or face up to the dirty reality of human nature. This was the kind of socialism Ma Thatcher had in mind when she declared that society did not exist. In its primitive sense of

people living together in a common life, by God, Sir, she had better believe in society, unless she intends to become a solitary stylist—which is not her scene at all. And they had better dust the pillar.

In the political ferment of the first half of the 19th century, it took socialism a long time to settle into the dictionary. Other words were in competition with it, and for a time preferred co-operative, mutualist, associationist, sociarian, phalanstarian (from phalanx), agrarianist, radical. In England, communism had strong religious attachments, while socialism was opposed to religion. Class came into it. It usually does. In his *Preface* of 1888, looking back on the *Communist Manifesto*, Engels wrote: "We could not have called it a *Socialist* manifesto. In 1847, Socialism was a middle-class movement, Communism a working-class movement. Socialism was on the continent, respectable. Communism was the very opposite. Socialism is dead, linguistically, in England for the present. But society lives. It had better. Compassion is not a sloppy, sentimental feeling for people who are underprivileged or sick. It is an absolutely practical belief that, regardless of a person's background, ability or ability to pay, he should be provided with the best that society has to offer." Neil Kinnock, in his maiden speech. Would that he were always so clear, and so socialist (in its original meaning).

Private lives, public relations

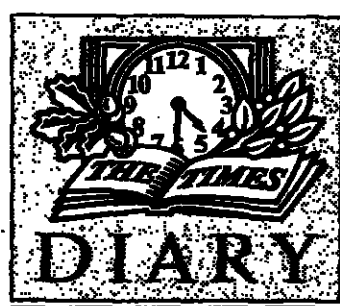
CHARLES ANSON may have been forced to apologise for his part in the row over the Yorks' separation but his irritation with the increasing use of outside PR advice by the younger royals is understandable.

While Sir Tim Bell and his employees were not responsible for the initial leak, David McDonough, a PR consultant, who works for Bell, was at the Yorks' home as recently as Wednesday this week at the personal request of the Duchess to advise on how the separation should be handled.

McDonough, aged 37, has been with Lowe Bell for about 18 months and met the Duchess through his first wife Kiki before the Yorks' marriage. He was telephoned at home by the Duchess on Wednesday morning and asked to call at Sunninghill Park. Before agreeing McDonough sought the permission of Bell, who consented on the understanding that he was acting in a private capacity. McDonough rang Bell again from the Yorks' home after meeting the Duke the Duchess together. He advised Bell that the split was irrevocable and that the Palace would be making a statement on Thursday.

What happened between that meeting and Anson's outburst against Bell the following day is not clear. But it is now known that McDonough first started advising both of the Yorks on "media relations" earlier this year, long before the split story broke. All insist that this was in a strictly "personal capacity".

Bell was yesterday denying a series of stories linking him with the Duchess. He rebutted a claim that he had attended a "summit"



with the Yorks and other members of the royal family at Kensington Palace in February at which the public image of the Duchess was discussed. Bell was also furious that the Palace failed to contact him to clarify his role before Anson's attack. He denied suggestions that last year he had offered his services to Buckingham Palace as a consultant at an annual fee of £70,000. Given events of the past 48 hours some at the Palace must now be wishing that he had been employed.

What to do with those 10,000 unsold BBC videos of Prince Andrew's wedding? BBC Enterprises were yesterday awaiting a call from Buckingham Palace. "Selling this tape could be considered distasteful. If we hear from the Palace, we will act immediately. Compared with other royal videos it was never a best-seller anyway."

Troubled paths

FOLLOWERS of A.S. Byatt on what has become known as "the Possession run" are causing serious concern to the guardians of the North-Yorkshire moors. Readers of the Booker Prize winning novel are hardly given to acts of hooliganism, but the numbers seeking to identify the book's landmarks are worrying the National

Park. Stuart Copeland, of the park authorities, says: "The problem is that places in *Possession* are easy to identify."

Byatt sympathises. "I know the area inside out. When I was at school in York they used to tip us out on the moors. When I was getting divorced I tramped the Roman road north from Pickering. Americans in particular seem to want to follow my footsteps." With Warner Brothers buying the option on the film, the problem is unlikely to go away. "Unless some big financial person decides to set it in Arizona," says Byatt. "That would certainly delight the park."

Pew, what a scorcher

THOSE who see the church collection as a repository for foreign coins left over from the last summer holiday have been put to shame by Holy Trinity Brompton

commissioner and former PPS to Mrs Thatcher, who is a prominent member of the congregation, says: "Admittedly Holy Trinity has a well heeled congregation from a relatively wealthy area. But it was a magnificent total."

Lambeth Palace says it keeps no league table of record collections. But, with the possible exception of a Billy Graham football stadium rally, can any British pulpit have ever topped Millar's appeal?

Byronic folk?

THE BYRON Society's general annual dinner at the House of Lords last night was a distinctly unByronic affair. Those celebrating the poet were treated to a learned lecture from Lord Blake. The occasion hardly seemed to reflect the spirit of the man who wrote: Let us have wine and women, mirth and laughter, Sermons and soda-water the day after.

The present Lord Byron, a sober solicitor, proposed the vote of thanks but even romantic poetry could not avoid the intrusion of the election campaign. Michael Foot, deputy chairman of the society, sent his apologies with a note: "Say to Lord Blake, wrote Foot, recalling a bon mot of Byron, 'that God will not always be a Tory.'"

If the election campaign is bearing an increasingly close resemblance to something out of Disneyland it is hardly surprising. The Tories have brought in Gary Withers to stage-manage the prime minister's rallies. Withers, the creative force behind the design group *Imagination*, has one other large project at the moment: he designed the 70 foot Disney spectacle at Battersea Park next week.



WHOSE INFLATION?

This election's economic statistics have not been kind to the government. Yesterday inflation was expected to have continued its recent downward path. In the event, it stayed the same. Few economists were dismayed. They are divided between those who believe that the Chancellor's prediction of 3% per cent inflation next year is right, and those who expect something even lower. Growth, unemployment, balance of payments, and interest rates may be better left unmentioned but inflation is the one statistic to which John Major's government can nail its colours.

Neil Kinnock called the figures "a very grave disappointment for the government". Of all the grounds on which the Labour leader will attack the government in this campaign, this is surely the least plausible. John Major, like Margaret Thatcher before him, has made the conquest of inflation the talisman of his economic policy. "People have not taken on board how much I loathe inflation," he told *The Times* this week. Its conquest has become a near obsession. The price in high unemployment, double-digit interest rates and record bankruptcies is, in the Chancellor's words, "well worth paying". While others, including this newspaper, might quarrel with so singular an objective in any political economy, at least the policy has achieved its stated aim. British inflation is now lower even than Germany's.

The inflation question in this campaign should be addressed to Mr Kinnock. Labour insists it is against inflation and its manifesto promises to curb it. The pound's value in the exchange-rate mechanism will be maintained, credit managed and "excessive" prices for water, electricity, telephones, transport and prescriptions prevented, its manifesto says. Yet inflation is a standing temptation to any government of the left, the technical outcome of the prescriptive policy known as reflation.

Mr Kinnock and John Smith, his stern chancellor, forswear any intention of using inflation as a redistributive weapon against those on fixed incomes or with fixed savings. Yet the policies on which they are fighting are not reassuring. Public expenditure will have a high prior claim on national resources. A Labour government will borrow

more than the Tories, since it will (says Labour) not have the benefit of receipts from privatisation. Private consumption will have to scabble for the scraps left over.

Those were Labour's priorities too in 1964-70, and again in 1974-7. Inflationary wage claims, as those in work sought to preserve living standards, were the result. Those claims this time will be exacerbated by Labour's national minimum wage. According to the Independent National Institute for Economic and Social Research, the party's declared policies will add 3 per cent to annual wage inflation by the end of 1993. Inflation will then be 5% per cent, two points higher than under the Tories.

The National Institute assumes that Labour sticks firm to the ERM. Mr Kinnock's and Mr Smith's commitment here is not in doubt. Mr Kinnock has forbidden the shadow cabinet even to discuss the possibility of leaving the ERM or lowering the parity of the pound within it. But some shadow ministers remember that Harold Wilson forbade his cabinet to discuss devaluation between 1964 and 1967. They do not intend to stay gagged for ever.

The argument against fixed exchange rates is as valid for Labour as for the Tories. The difference is that Labour is more inclined to opt for inflation and growth than deflation, and continued recession. Imagine the governor of the Bank of England, in all his pomp, visiting Number 10 to tell Mr Kinnock that interest rates must go up. Will Mr Kinnock agree? Or will he and his colleagues find their commitment to the ERM (and its sudden less attractive? One devaluation of the party within the ERM might be negotiable with Europe. But it is no good Labour pretending that, coupled with the party's other cost-push policies, it would not rekindle the fires of inflation.

There is much to be said against the present government's continued repression of economic activity, in the cause of an unmeasurable target of zero growth in prices. It is even possible that interest rates could be lowered without damaging sterling's ERM parity. But for Labour to pretend that its policies might better the government's on inflation is fantasy.

BURMESE BULLIES

If the new world order is to mean anything, it cannot include as a normal member of international society the kind of gangster government that has tyrannised Burma for a generation. That hapless country suffers under a regime that annuls elections, imprisons and tortures its opponents, burns villages, and kills men, women and children while herding the survivors of a persecuted ethnic minority into labour camps.

The world has at last lost patience with the State Law and Order Restoration Council in Rangoon, which is carrying out a pogrom against the Rohingyas, a Muslim community in the western Arakan province, while simultaneously invading Thailand to bomb and shell Karen rebels on the Thai border in the east. President Bush has already suspended aid programmes and imposed trade sanctions on Burma. Now he has warned the junta that America will step up its pressure and has promised support for Bangladesh in its attempt to cope with a tide of refugees arriving at the rate of over 4,000 a day.

The United Nations is to send Jan Eliasson, the under-secretary general and emergency relief co-ordinator, to Rangoon next week to try to halt the persecution that is causing the exodus. And Burma's neighbours have now realised that they can no longer connive in the evil by ignoring the violations of human rights while negotiating profitable logging deals and selling arms to a junta made rich from opium smuggling.

The reluctance of fellow south-east Asian countries to confront Burma is the main reason why the junta has been able to shrug off world outrage over its cancellation of the election results and house arrest of Aung San Suu Kyi, the 1991 Nobel prize winner. The Burmese army is strong, ruthless and used to jungle combat. Neither impoverished Bangladesh nor Thailand has been able to

risk a confrontation, especially as Burma has long enjoyed the shadowy protection of China, Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore. Believed Burma could be left out of any south-east Asian equation. None has a good enough human rights record to join any crusade against Burma's violations.

Their intransigence is no longer tenable. The junta's persecution of the Rohingyas has already driven 210,000 over the border into Bangladesh, and the number could soon reach 300,000. Bangladesh, one of the world's poorest countries, cannot feed or house them. They are spawning guerrilla organisations that may soon provoke retaliation from Burma. Thailand too can no longer ignore the daily violations of its sovereignty as Burmese troops occupy Thai border zones to plan their attack on the Karen headquarters. Burma is now behaving like Cambodia under the Khmer Rouge, its brutality at home directly threatening the political stability of its neighbours.

South-east Asia may now be more responsive to the warnings that have largely come from the West. Bangladesh has called for UN help, and China, India and Japan are being pushed to take a tougher line — not before time. China especially should use its influence in Rangoon to warn the junta of the consequences of its policies.

The UN Security Council must treat the persecution of the Rohingyas as a threat to international peace and security, as was Iraq's killing of the Kurds. Rangoon must be threatened with graduated penalties, including an immediate halt to the \$6 billion arms and trade links with neighbouring countries, a cut-off of all Western aid and possible full-scale UN sanctions. The world is paying heavily for the legacy of the Khmer Rouge; it cannot afford to pay again for the destruction caused by the Rangoon junta.

FLYING CANDIDATES

Which party promises low taxes for all, total security, and the complete elimination of disease, crime and pollution from the land? It sounds worth a whistle, and even a vote. Especially when the party undertakes in addition to keep the path of politics neat, clean, progressive and inspiring to all, nourishing to all, and satisfying to all.

This is the Natural Law party, which launched its campaign yesterday, and interrupted *The Times*'s election coverage with a page advertisement of its manifesto beside another full page portraying 119 of its candidates. They stared out of their oval frames with grins glossy enough to make a sensitive reader do the nose trick with his coffee. The party declares that it aims to have candidates in all 651 constituencies, which is going to cost it £320,550 (if it achieves its aim), even before it pays for its double-page spread. The manifesto is silent on the party's attitude to the prompt payment of bills.

That is about the only issue on which this latest manifesto of the 1992 election is silent. The Natural Law party has understood the natural law of political manifestos, which is that they should be generally inspiring but say nothing binding. The thousands of words in its manifesto contain a mountain of verbiage to a workman of hard policy, as a good manifesto should. Its introductory axiom, "Only a new seed will yield a new crop", is a meaningless Old Muckspreader agricultural proverb, which would make as much (or as little) sense if old were substituted for new in its permutation. If they had lived up to their policies, the

leaders of the Natural Law party should have levitated while they launched their campaign yesterday. This is not to make any insinuation about their weight as politicians. But these are the original floating voters. Levitation is part of their way of life. The party is the latest reincarnation of the gossamer ideology of the Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, once personal guru to the Beatles, later transmogrified into transcendental meditation or TM, with Yogic and Vedantic trimmings.

But then every politician is a promising politician. Natural Law merely promises more incredibly than most. That is no reason for denying it its place in the election campaign, which attracts publicity-seekers as a bonfire attracts fly-by-nights. Political purists want to discourage such wild and woolly fringe candidates by raising the cost of a lost deposit from £500 to £1,000, or even £5,000, and by increasing the number of electors in a constituency needed to sign a candidate's nomination papers to 100.

By no means all who announce they are standing for Parliament with serious intent actually run, once they have enjoyed their moment in the camera flash. The fringes bring a touch of levity to the grey grind of election time. They serve the purpose of the Roman slave standing behind the conquering hero in his chariot, whispering in his ear to remember that he is mortal, and that there are more things in heaven and earth than are dreamed of in his politics. As for manifestos, when any political party performs all its vaguely high-minded promises, pigs (or politicians) will fly.

Speedier payment of legal fees

From the Lord Chancellor

Sir, The attempt by the Chairman of the Bar and the President of the Law Society (letter, March 14) to draw a comparison between the payment regime which operates for legal aid and the Chancellor of the Exchequer's moves to assist small companies suffering from late payment of bills is misleading.

The system of payment operated for the legal profession, as a result of arrangements long since established, is that payment is determined at the end of the case by a process of assessment or taxation, with an ultimate appeal to the court if the lawyer is not satisfied with the assessment. To depart from this system to one in which payment can be determined quickly, and without detailed assessment, is an object of my proposal for standard fees.

Where an assessment is to be made the amount owing is not determined until the end of the case. In order to assist the profession's cash flow, shortly after I came to office, I was able to introduce a permanent payments-on-account scheme in which lawyers are paid after 18 months of the issue of a civil legal aid certificate (i.e. a date before the work starts) a percentage, not of the amount owing, as the letter suggests, but of the amount claimed in respect of work done up to the date of claim.

The percentages paid have risen 8 per cent per annum each year from 1989-90. I have been able to shorten the qualifying time for solicitors this year to 12 months, although retaining last year's percentage payment. The Bar did not find this change attractive.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer was referring to companies who deliberately delayed payment of amounts legally due. This position is one I strongly support. I would be delighted if the legal profession could move to a position which obviated the need for determination of fees at the end of a case. A most suitable area for such a change, because 67 per cent of the payments are under £400, is that for defence work in the magistrates' courts.

Yours sincerely,
JAMES MACKAY,
House of Lords,
March 19.

Beaches and blue flags

From the Director General of the Tidy Britain Group

Sir, The commendation by Guy Linley-Adams and Gina Rozner (letter, March 13) of this group's new Seaside Awards is misleading. As the co-ordinating body for the European blue flag in Britain, we are concerned that the public should be as well informed as possible about the beaches in the United Kingdom that attain high water quality and good standards of cleanliness, management and facilities.

Our awards provide the first national measure by which to assess UK beaches. They will not be "easy to achieve", as your correspondents allege, nor will they merely "signify excellent water quality". They will show that a beach has attained and maintained high standards in both water quality (meeting at least the mandatory EC requirement) and higher criteria for the conditions of beaches than those required for the European blue flag.

All beaches falling below standard will have their flag and award removed. A beach attaining the EC's higher "guideline" water quality will be awarded a premier category of the Seaside Award, signifying that it has attained a higher standard than any blue-flag beach.

Yours faithfully,
GRAHAM ASHWORTH,
Director General,
Tidy Britain Group, The Pier,
Wigan, Greater Manchester,
March 17.

Remembrance of TA

From Mr Claude R. Hart

Sir, The "Options for Change" initiative will eventually lead to the closing of various TA establishments throughout the UK. Here in Sevenoaks, for instance, the drill hall is already threatened with demolition. Show us someone take charge of recording these establishments for posterity? In their heyday, from before the first world war to after the second, these buildings oversaw the selfless labours of two generations.

What a shame it would be if the spirit these buildings represented were lost to future generations.

Yours sincerely,
CLAUDE R. HART,
6 Egean Walk, Dartford Road,
Sevenoaks, Kent.

Chi canta?

From Mr John Sherman

Sir, In her column praising the Coliseum ("Chorus of approval", March 19), Rachel Kelly writes breathlessly of the emotional power of opera. The Duke's rendition of the aria *Caro nome* to Gilda, in *Rigoletto*, made the hairs on the back of her neck bristle, she says. It must have had at least the same effect on Gilda, who was meant to be singing it.

Yours faithfully,
JOHN SHERMAN,
97 Barkston Gardens, SW5.

Weekend Money letters, page 30

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN Telephone 071-782 5000

Church's ministry among the Jews

From Lord Blanch

Sir, I write to applaud Clifford Longley's article, "Christians and Jews are both 'peoples of God'" (March 14), and to respond to it. I do so as president of the CMJ (Church's Ministry among the Jews) to which he refers. It is one of the oldest societies in the Anglican Church (founded 1809).

The CMJ runs the Anglican School in Jerusalem, patronised by Jews, Arabs and expatriates. It owns a conference centre on Mount Carmel, which is used as a meeting place, without discrimination, by Arabs and Israelis, Jews and Christians, politicians and religious leaders of any persuasion. It sponsors Holy Land tours, remarkable for their non-partisan approach and impeccable scholarship.

CMJ counsellors are available in most of the main centres of Judaism world wide. It is not always recognised that many who are Jews by birth are seriously estranged from their ancestral religion and aloof from its faith and practice. It is especially amongst such that the society represents the more positive and pastoral side of Christianity, in

contrast to the savage persecutions and forcible conversions to which Mr Longley alludes.

I could not have remained president of the society if I had suspected that its work was being conducted on the basis of high-pressure salesmanship, misleading arguments or invidious comparisons. It stands for a "ministry amongst the Jews" on behalf of a church which owes everything to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and so often disowns or ignores its own origins. Jesus was a Jew.

The Archbishop of Canterbury's recent decision (report, March 11), of which Mr Longley writes, does not imply any criticism of the society, as he has made abundantly clear, but proceeds from his overriding responsibility for promoting harmonious relationships across the boundaries of race and religion world wide. With that end in view he has to limit his formal links with particular enterprises, however valuable in their own right.

Yours sincerely,
BLANCH,
House of Lords.

Trade policy gap

From the Chief Executive of Booker plc

Sir, The public debate engendered by the general election campaign seems marked by the striking omission of a policy issue which goes to the heart of any sustained economic recovery. Trade policy, the future of the Uruguay Round, Gatt and reform of the CAP barely feature in the various economic solutions and headline agenda items.

This is curious, given that most commentators point out that trade liberalisation is essential for creating conditions for sustained growth and prosperity. It is perhaps even stranger that there should be this absence of interest in the UK, which is a trading nation and depends to a large measure on the general level of world trade.

Tax and middle classes

From Professor A. B. Atkinson, FBA

Sir, Articles by Anatole Kaletsky on Labour's shadow budget (March 16 and 17) demonstrate the potentially misleading nature of hypothetical tax calculations. His example of a married man, with no children, and a mortgage of twice salary, raises more questions than it answers.

How is the comparison with 1978 — the main point of Mr Kaletsky's article — affected by the particular assumptions? What would happen if the man were assumed to have paid off his mortgage, or to have income from savings, or if his wife had a job? Changing the assumptions in such hypothetical examples can change the conclusions: take away the mortgage and the results have to be substantially modified.

It is possible to multiply the examples, but none would be representative. This is why research on taxation policy has moved on in the past five years — to the use of tax-benefit models based on surveys of the population. Such a model has been used in the examination of John

Smith's budget plans by the Institute for Fiscal Studies (they estimate that four out of five families would gain).

Use of such representative surveys is essential to put Mr Kaletsky's examples in perspective. He refers to a man on £30,000 as "middle-class"; but 19 out of 20 people earn less than this amount (*New Earnings Survey*, 1991).

Yours faithfully,
A. B. ATKINSON,
33 Hurst Green,
Brightlingsea, Essex.

Foreign interest

From Mr Marc Gordon

Sir, Peter Riddell makes the point that foreign policy will not have a high profile in the general election campaign (article, March 18). However, his belief that "The broad approaches of the two parties have converged following Labour's switch to embrace the European Community and to accept the retention of the nuclear deterrent" is somewhat simplistic. The present government has made many errors internationally, not least over its hesitant response to the recent events in the ex-Soviet Union, but has in general supported free market and democratic forces where necessary.

As a report ("Safe in their hands") we have published this week ably demonstrates, the present Labour leadership and the party in general has time and time again, in Latin America, Africa and East Europe, shown an unwavering willingness in recent years to place socialist ideology and international fraternity before national interest.

Whilst, for example Bryan Gould, Ann Clwyd and other Labour front-benchers continue to support the pro-Castro UK-Cuba Friendship Association we should be aware that not all the skeletons may yet have been banished from the Labour closet.

Yours faithfully,
MARC GORDON
(Executive Director),
International Freedom Foundation,
Suite 500, Chesham House,
150 Regent Street, W1,
March 18.

The business vote

From the Chairman of the Weir Group

Sir, Lord Hollick and others (letter, March 18) applaud Labour's proposed "provision of capital allowances which will provide a substantial incentive to bring investment forward this year".

They must be easily satisfied, as this "substantial incentive" is worth under 5 per cent on capital expenditure in the first year, and a paltry 2 per cent on the longer term dis-

counted basis on which most firms appraise investment.

In the case of this company, these benefits in cash terms are only a modest fraction of the substantial and direct incentive to management which Labour's personal tax proposals threaten. Surely it is men, not machines on their own, that generate wealth from investment?

Yours faithfully,
WEIR, Chairman,
The Weir Group,
149 Newlands Road,
Cathcart, Glasgow.

Political roundabout

From Mr Humphry Berkeley

Sir, I am greatly flattered by the remarks made about me by my friend, Sir Robert Rhodes James, in his article of March 14 ("Here's to the class of '59"). To answer his question, I joined the Labour party in 1970 and joined the SDP, because the Labour party adopted a non-nuclear defence policy. I rejoined the Labour party in 1988, when Neil Kinnock made it plain that a Labour government would not give away our nuclear capacity without any concessions in return. It is often not realised that political parties change their character quite as frequently as people change their views.

Yours faithfully,
HUMPHRY BERKELEY,
Three Pages Yard, Chiswick, W4.

Heartfelt prayer

From Mr G. A. H. Watts

Sir, Some of your readers might be glad of the prayer offered during the communion service last Sunday by the Reverend Alan Graham of St Michael and All Angels, Lyndhurst, Hampshire.

Lord, as we enter these weeks leading up to the general election, help and guide the leaders of the political parties... and for those who have no interest in politics grant us the patience to cope.

Yours faithfully,
G. A. H. WATTS,
Stroat House,
Stroat, Chepstow, Gwent,
March 20.

Letters to the editor should carry a daytime telephone number. They may be sent to a fax number — (071) 782 5046.

Under-developed but over-used

From Mrs Rosemary Bailey

Sir, I read Mrs Peggy Harbridge's letter (March 18) with great excitement. Not being a keen photographer I visit local chemists and camera shops to beg for these empty film canisters for which she seeks a use.

I am a Brownie Guider and have endless uses for them — storing sequins, tiny beads and other small craft items. Brownies do not waste so much glue if they are given a film container with a small amount in. But our best use is for sewing kits.

Yours faithfully,
ROSEMARY BAILEY,
7 Tait House, Greet Street, SE1.

From Mrs Melissa Hawes
Sir, The best use is as holders of my children's pocket money. One or two can hold savings, one can hold book money and one can hold money for sweets. They can be customised by each child, labelled and even decorated. They fit neatly into pockets, are hard to drop unwittingly and the close-fitting lids are particularly important as one of my daughters has an uncanny knack of losing one pound coin.

Yours faithfully,
MELISSA G. HAWES,
21 Allard Crescent,
Bushey Heath, Hertfordshire.

From Mr D. W. Wilcox
Sir, We have written separately to Mrs Harbridge about the recycling of plastic film containers, but would like to reassure your readers that Kodak Limited takes its "green" responsibilities very seriously.

When films are sent for processing, they should be returned in the canister. Procedures are in place for the canisters in turn to be sent to recycling agents.

Yours faithfully,
D. W. WILCOX (Manager),
Corporate Public Relations
and Communications Division,
Kodak Limited, PO Box 66,
Hemel Hempstead, Hertfordshire.

From Ms Peni Walker
Sir, Peggy Harbridge identifies a problem which is all too common in this country — packaging manufacturers just "don't want to know" when it comes to recycling their products. A European directive on packaging is being negotiated in Brussels — Friends of the Earth is pressing the government to agree to one which makes manufacturers responsible for ensuring that their packaging gets recycled.

In the meantime, such items could be returned to the manufacturers — they created the problem, let them solve it.

Yours sincerely,
PENI WALKER
(Recycling campaigner),
Friends of the Earth,
26-28 Underwood Street, N1.

From Mr J. P. Chambers
Sir, Film canisters, complete with colour-coded lids, are ideal for separating, storing and transporting coins from different countries. In my experience only the 50p and Swiss 5-franc piece are too big.

Yours sincerely,
J. P. CHAMBERS,
24 Green Lane, Tadworth, Surrey.

From Dr R. M. Pearson
Sir, They make very suitable containers for change for parking meters. Yours faithfully,
RICHARD PEARSON,
10 Clock Tower Mews,
Arlington Avenue, Islington, N1.

From Mr Peter Butler
Sir, Those pesky, plastic, pots are ideal companions on overseas trips. Waterproof, light and taking little room, they have carried my pills and potions, salt, pepper and even Marmite these many years. Yours faithfully,
PETER BUTLER,
9 Holborn, Westgate House, EC1.

From Mr C. J. E. Moysen
Sir, I have found them an ideal alternative to hanging corks from your "Australian-look" outback headgear. Excellent for a fancy dress party. Yours faithfully,
C. J. E. MOYSEN,
3 Gaydon Road,
Bishop's Cleeve, Warwickshire.

From Mr Julian Smith
Sir, I find they prove invaluable receptacles for safely keeping tube files and hooks while salmon fishing. Yours faithfully,
JULIAN SMITH,
Egremont House, Belmont,
Nr Bolton, Lancashire.

From Ms Ann Drysdale
Sir, Empty film containers, threaded in groups of seven or eight on random lengths of string, make an ideal gift for patio-squating neighbours which is of equal benefit to both parties — the silent windchime. Yours faithfully,
ANN DRYSDALE,
8 Mount Pleasant, Blaina, Gwent.

From Mrs David Pentreath
Sir, They are extremely useful for storing different sizes of calligraphy pen nibs, and also for carrying a small amount of water for washing nibs at one's calligraphy classes. Yours faithfully,
JUDITH PENTREATH,
The Old House, Holt Green,
Wimborne, Dorset.

From Dr S. Charles Lewsen
Sir, Mrs Harbridge would be well advised to give them to any modern sculptor, whence they are quite likely to end up at the Tate. Yours faithfully,
S. CHARLES LEWSEN,
35 Marlborough Place, NW8.

"He did not ask for one." He explained that the large number of lights had been used because of the poor lighting in the hall.

Facilities for filming in Port Glasgow town hall and Pollokshaws burgh hall, Glasgow, last night were withdrawn yesterday.

MONEY

Profile

In his youth, Sir Christopher Benson, the chairman of MEPC, the property group, had dreams of being in the Royal Navy and playing rugby for England but was forced to rebuild his life after a terrible car accident. He has made a success of his second-choice career and has held a number of chairmanships. Page 21



Value deducted

Low property valuations are helping to jeopardise the housing market recovery and buyers often cannot complete deals because their mortgage offer, after valuation, is too low. Page 23

More say

A simpler regulatory system is being proposed for brokers and insurance company sales agents, which should give investors more say and speedier compensation payments. Page 27

They forgot my title... Oh dear, so have I.



Letters Page 30

Bonds review

Life offices have been told by the Life Assurance and Unit Trust Regulatory Organisation (Lautro) to review their marketing of with-profits bonds after widespread concern that they have been wrongly sold as short-term secure alternatives to building society accounts. Mike Abrahams, the chief enforcement officer of Lautro, said that investors could be paid compensation if it was found that they did not understand they were buying for the long term. Page 25

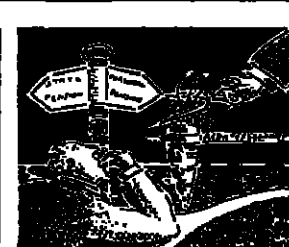


Charged up

Retailers may refuse to accept credit and debit cards if proposed increases in bank charges for servicing transactions go ahead. Barclays has put up charges and others will follow. Page 24

Sales scrutiny

Unscrupulous traders may not be stopped by threats of new powers for trading standards officers to ensure that sale prices are genuine. Officers say the proposals will not help. Page 24



Opt for change

Labour's announcement that it will remove any incentive for contracting out of the state earnings-related pension scheme will reduce opting-in ages by five to seven years. Page 28

Branson sues BA for libel in High Court

By JON ASHWORTH

THE simmering row between Virgin Atlantic and British Airways turned into a battle yesterday as Virgin and its founder, Richard Branson, launched libel proceedings in the High Court against BA and its chairman, Lord King.

The action follows comments made in a BA News article, various letters and a press release published and issued by the flag carrier. The release related to allegations made by Virgin Atlantic of unacceptable business practices by BA.

Mr Branson, who two weeks ago sold Virgin Music to Thorn EMI for £510 million, appears to have been goaded into action by recent comments from Lord King. In a statement, Mr Branson said: "Lord King said earlier this month that 'despite repeatedly threatening to take legal action against us, Mr Branson has to date failed to do so'. Until now, I have done everything I can to avoid two British airlines ending up in court against each other.

BA responded: "We will defend these proceedings vigorously."

The matter is now in the hands of our lawyers. Virgin has called on the services of Bob Beckman, the American lawyer who helped Sir Freddie Laker in his case against alleged anti-competitiveness by BA. Mr Beckman was instructed to institute formal proceedings against BA in America just over a week ago, but no writs have been served as yet.

In November, Mr Branson announced he was to complain to the Civil Aviation Authority, the transport department and the European Commission over an alleged "dirty tricks" campaign against his airline by the flag carrier.

He had compiled a dossier listing 100 incidents in which, Mr Branson claimed, he had been the victim of malicious disinformation.

Mr Branson said at the time that he was shocked and disgusted by what appeared to be a carefully orchestrated campaign. He claimed that Virgin documents outlining the airline's potential financial difficulties were being distributed to the press. BA denied any part in such a campaign. The row between Virgin and BA has been fuelled by an increasingly competitive airline market in which too many airlines are chasing too few passengers.

Although tiny by comparison with British Airways, Vir-

gin has successfully poached some of its rival's most profitable routes. The battle for business began in earnest last July, when Virgin began flying from Heathrow for the first time.

Later that month, Virgin was awarded a licence to begin flights to South Africa, hence threatening to end the highly lucrative monopoly enjoyed by BA and South African Airways since 1946.

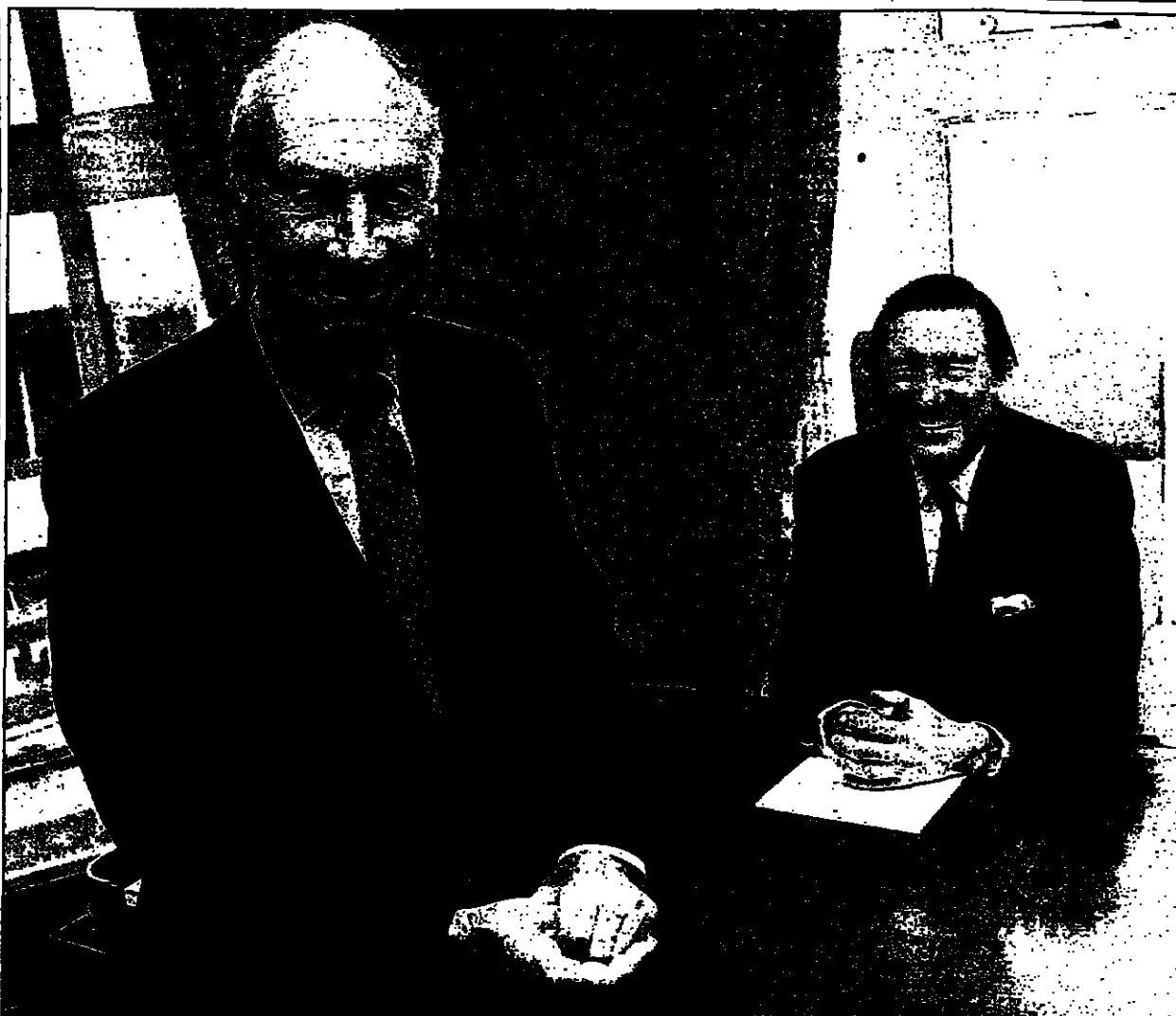
In August, Virgin turned up the heat further by undercutting BA's fares to America by up to £90. In November, as the "dirty tricks" row erupted, Virgin tried to force BA to give up one of its Tokyo slots. The Civil Aviation Authority blocked the move.

The battle lines were drawn this month when Mr Branson demanded a full apology from Lord King over the alleged attacks against him and Virgin.

Mr Branson leaves for Johannesburg tonight to negotiate slots for Virgin's proposed South African service. He returns to Britain on Wednesday. Currently, only SAA and BA serve Johannesburg direct from Heathrow.

Mr Branson hopes to have seven flights a week to Johannesburg by the end of the year.

He is due to hold talks with the South African minister of tourism early next week and is confident that his request for slots will be approved.



Timetable talk: Sir Peter Gibbins (left) and David McCall, the chief executive of Anglia

Anglia broadcasts weaker profits picture

By GILLIAN BOWDITCH

SIR Peter Gibbins, chairman of Anglia Television, which won its Channel 3 franchise last October with a bid of £17.8 million, yesterday described the bidding process as farcical despite expressing his delight at the group's success.

Pre-tax profits fell to £8.73 million in the 14 months to

end-December from £14.9 million in the 12 months to end-October 1990. During that period, turnover rose to £153 million (£124 million), with programme sales accounting for £22.4 million (£12.9 million).

Expenditure on programmes, both acquired and own productions, reached £62 million (£40.2 million), while investment income fell to £1.76

million (£5.2 million). Earnings fell from 21.9p to 13.3p a share and the final dividend is held at 6.4p, for an unchanged annual 9.26p.

The group's share of industry advertising revenue increased from 6.72 per cent to 6.75 per cent. Sir Peter admitted that if the full costs of retaining the Channel 3 licence had been implemented this year, the group would

have made a loss. He added that by the time the full costs come on line in 1993, when Anglia will have to pay the £17.8 million plus 7 per cent of its revenue to the Exchequer, the group will have the benefits of cost cutting economies and higher revenue.

About 200 jobs, 22 per cent of the workforce, have been shed during the past two years.

Widow's support, page 1

Sterling weathers a week of gloom

By COLIN NARBROUGH, ECONOMICS CORRESPONDENT

THE pound and shares ended the week almost exactly where they started, despite a week full of mainly gloomy economic indicators.

After figures that showed annual inflation in February dropping below the German rate for the first time in almost 25 years, sterling yesterday stood at DM2.8619 at the official Bank of England close, almost half a pence up on its Thursday finish. It began the week at DM2.8572.

The week's gyrations left the pound at \$1.7007 yesterday, down more than a cent from the previous close. Sterling's trade-weighted index was steady on 85.8, precisely where it started the week. The dollar's strength was the

main feature of foreign exchange market yesterday. The American currency moved ahead after reports that President Bush was discussing Iraq with his chief of staff. Fears of military action in the Gulf, or against Libya, drove investors into the dollar, the traditional safe haven.

Although Britain's annual inflation held steady at 4.1 per cent in February, slightly disappointing the City, foreign exchange dealers shrugged off the data. The pound was mainly helped by the softer mark, sentiment for which had also been hit by further strike action by German bank workers.

Inflation static, page 1
Leading article, page 15

Pro-Chinese papers attack Midland deal

By OUR BANKING CORRESPONDENT

PRO-CHINESE newspapers in Hong Kong have criticised the Hongkong and Shanghai Bank's merger with Midland at the end of a week of unusually muted reaction.

The newspapers, often a mouthpiece for official Chinese views, accused HSBC Holdings, the bank's holding company, of handing its shareholders' interests to a British bank and using the merger to transfer its secret reserves out of the crown colony before China takes control in 1997.

The comments from two newspapers, the *Wen Wei Po* and the *Ta Kung Po*, suggest the Chinese government is not happy with the bank's attempt to broaden its operations before 1997. The ap-

proval of the Chinese government is considered vital to the success of the merger. "Hong Kong people have every reason to ask HSBC to be committed to the smooth transition and the stability and prosperity of Hong Kong," said *Ta Kung Po*.

Meanwhile, William Purvis, the chairman of Hongkong Bank, said the deal would not be completed before July at the earliest.

He said some of the bank's head office functions would move to London if the merger went ahead. Sources close to the bank, however, say the entire head office will eventually move to London.

Week Ending, page 21

Gold carrier nears brink of sale

FROM PHILIP ROBINSON IN NEW YORK

BRINK'S-MAT, whose high security warehouse near Heathrow was relieved of £26 million worth of gold bullion in Britain's largest robbery almost ten years ago, is believed to be up for sale.

Although the company issued conflicting statements from two sources yesterday, analysts are convinced that the armoured car and security group, which plays a key role in moving Britain's international gold and currency around the world, is being sold as part of a reorganisation by its American parent, which lost \$150 million last year.

Brink's-MAT is part of the Brink's Inc security empire owned by Pittston & Co, which mines coal from the Appalachian mountains of



Virginia, West Virginia and Kentucky and exports 70 per cent of its product. Pittston also owns Burlington Air Express, the general cargo freight carrier it bought in 1982 for \$177 million, but last year made just \$19.8 million profit on a turnover of \$875.9 million.

Pittston has announced that under Joseph Farrell, its new chairman and chief executive, it is accelerating efforts to sell Burlington to

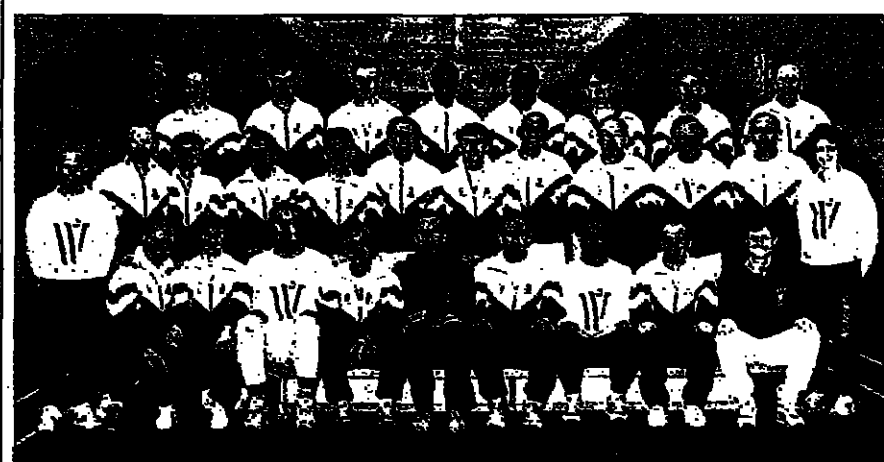
concentrate on its core interest of mining coal. A company spokesman in Virginia said the company would also consider selling Brink's Inc and the Brink's Home Security Inc interests, once the Burlington operation has been sold. But William Byrne, a spokesman for the company at its headquarters in Greenwich, Connecticut, said: "That statement was wrong. I would not like to speculate on whether we will

sell Brink's after we have sold Burlington, nor whether it [Brink's] forms part of our core mining business."

Mr Byrne said shareholder values would be best served by a sale of Burlington. If no buyer was found, a sale to the public through a share offer would be considered.

Industry sources say Pittston, which exports an estimated 40 per cent of production to Japan, faced some of the most bitter strikes during the late Eighties when trying to renegotiate a union contract to keep its mines open around the clock. An acrimonious 11-month stoppage ended two years ago. In the strike year, Pittston's profits fell to \$3.8 billion on a turnover of \$1.8 billion and its shares have never topped \$22.25. Analysts estimate that a \$1,000 investment in 1980 would have been worth only \$1005 by 1990.

WHITTINGDALE CRICKET PLAN A MAJOR SUCCESS



CONSERVATIVE INVESTMENT WINS FOR WHITTINGDALE
WHITTINGDALE - THE OFFICIAL COACHING SPONSOR OF THE ENGLAND CRICKET SQUAD

WHITTINGDALE
GILT-EDGED EXPERTS

Whittingdale Unit Trust Management Limited is a Member of DMR and LAUTRO. Whittingdale Limited is a Member of DMR.

THE POUND
US dollar 1.7007 (-0.0113)
German mark 2.8619 (+0.0046)
Exchange index 89.8 (same)
Bank of England official close (4pm)

STOCK MARKET

FT 30 share 1916.5 (-6.6)
FT-SE 100 2456.6 (-11.0)
New York Dow Jones 3268.11 (+6.71)
Tokyo Nikkei Avege Closed

INTEREST RATES

London: Bank Base: 10.15%
3-month interbank 10.15-10.4%
3-month sterling bill 10.4-10.5%
US: Prime Rate 8.75%
Federal Funds 3.75%
3-month Treasury bills 4.05-4.04%
30-year bonds 9.5-9.6%

CURRENCIES

London: New York
£: \$1.7055
£: DM2.8619
£: Sfr1.2595
£: FFfr.7025
£: Yen229.34
£: Index89.8
ECU 60.714167 SDR 60.734552
ECU1.402232 SDR1.259570
London forex market close

GOLD

London Fixing:
AM \$337.50 pm \$338.50
close \$339.10 \$339.50 (\$199.30-199.80)
New York:
Comex \$338.95-339.45*

NORTH SEA OIL

Brent (Apr) \$17.50 bbl (\$17.90)

RETAIL PRICES

RPI: 136.3 February (1987-100)
* Denotes midday trading price

Mindis loss holds back recovery at Attwoods

BY MARTIN BARROW

ATTWOODS, the waste disposal concern forced to make a deeply discounted rights issue last year to cut debt, is holding the interim dividend at 1.75p a share for the six months to end-January.

Although profits were virtually unchanged at £16.51 million before tax, against £16.47 million, earnings fell from 5.07p a share to 4.27p, reflecting the 20 per cent increase in the number of shares issued after the £80 million cash call.

Ken Foreman, chairman, said he hoped to make a further announcement late next month on the progress of talks with bankers in Britain and America aimed at restructuring borrowings by replacing short-term debt with longer-term finance. That weakness led to last year's credit crunch.

The company has debts of up to £100 million but also holds £40 million in cash. Gearing is just 28 per cent and cash flow remains strong. Edwin Johnson, a director and chief financial officer of Attwoods in America, the largest subsidiary, has been appointed group finance director. He succeeds Stuart Lee, who resigned in February.

Turnover rose from £129.33 million to £168.3 million but operating profits rose by just £900,000 to

£18.18 million, reflecting margin pressure. All divisions increased profits except Mindis, the recyclable materials processing and marketing company based in America, which incurred a pre-tax loss of \$900,000 compared to a \$6 million profit in the first half of last year.

Mr Foreman said that he expected Mindis to return to profit in the second half following significant cost reductions and some improvement in metal prices. In the longer term, Mindis seeks to increase volumes of less volatile non-metal recyclables.

UK profits rose from £1.37 million to £2.47 million, helped by a full contribution from Ebenezer Mears, a quarrying and landfill company acquired last April that more than offset the impact of poor demand for quarry products and reduced volumes of waste from the construction industry.

America contributed £11.6 million, down from £13.74 million, reflecting losses at Mindis and the impact of a stronger dollar, which reduced earnings in sterling by 8 per cent. European activities, centred in Germany, earned £4.36 million (£2.18 million last year) as demand for portable accommodation units continued to grow strongly, particularly in eastern Germany.

Rosehaugh wins time from banks

BY OUR CITY STAFF

ROSEHAUGH, the troubled property company, has reached a new funding agreement with its banks until January 1994, winning more time to achieve disposals that are needed to reduce its crippling debt burden.

Leonard Kingshott, chairman, said the agreement allowed the company to concentrate on managing its core businesses and to pursue its

disposal programme in an orderly fashion. Rosehaugh shares rose from 64p to 9p while shares in Stanhope Properties, Rosehaugh's partner in the Broadgate office complex in the City of London, closed 3p higher at 27p.

The agreement with 26 banks covers borrowings of £310 million but does not include debts associated with Rosehaugh Stanhope Developments. Higher funding costs and fees are likely but Paul Rivlin, finance director, declined to comment on reports in money markets that Rosehaugh will pay a margin of at least 1½ points over the London interbank offered rate (Libor) for its existing facilities.

It is believed that the agreement allows for bank fees to be paid only from the proceeds of asset sales.

Rosehaugh is committed to selling property but no sales schedule has been imposed by the banks because of the difficult market conditions. Mr Rivlin said £100 million had been raised through disposals in the current financial year, which ends on June 30. The company continues to make trading losses and remains "very cautious" about prospects, he said.

Refinancing talks began late last year after the company breached banking covenants. Its financial position was further weakened by the collapse of protracted merger talks with Stanhope that were finally aborted in January. At the same time Godfrey Bradman, the founder, stepped down as chairman and resigned from the board last month.

Nestlé rises despite costs

Nestlé said profits improved and sales margins were steady last year despite increased restructuring costs.

The company raised consolidated net profit to Sfr2.47 billion (£953 million) in 1991 from Sfr2.27 billion in 1990.

It said its sales margin was unchanged at 4.9 per cent. Group sales rose to Sfr50.49 billion last year from Sfr46.37 billion in 1990, an increase of 8.9 per cent. Sales volume rose 4 per cent.

Molins, which last November finally shook Leucadia, a 48.4 per cent shareholder, from its register, is paying a total 1991 dividend of 12.75p a share (12p) after pre-tax profits up from £15.2 million to £15.5 million.

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Clearer path: Ken Foreman, chairman of Attwoods, who is having talks aimed at restructuring borrowings

BA buys German airline

BY OUR INDUSTRIAL STAFF

BRITISH Airways' strategy for developing a domestically-based operation to maintain a strong presence in Germany has accelerated with the acquisition of Delta, the regional German airline.

The plan is to build up the Delta operation substantially by bringing in new aircraft within a few months to expand a network of domestic and international services.

Deutsche BA, formed by a consortium of German banks and British Airways, is making the purchase. BA holds 49 per cent and three banks the remainder. The price has not been disclosed but is probably less than £5 million.

The new company is seen by BA as a key operational base since it has to withdraw progressively from its German activities centred on Berlin.

Richard Heidecker, Delta's managing director, will continue to run the airline, which will now operate as Deutsche BA. Delta was a "highly run" regional airline, which BA decided offered the soundest way of establishing a new carrier in Germany, he said.

Robert Ayling, BA's director of marketing and operations, said the move was an important investment and commercial development for BA in the evolving German and continental European air transport markets. BA American Airlines, the largest American carrier, is poised to take a substantial stake in Canadian Airlines. The alliance would give AA access to Canadian's extensive Pacific routes in exchange for capital.

Berisford calls off rights after loan deal with banks

BY OUR CITY STAFF

BERISFORD International, the commodity trading group, said that it would proceed with a proposed £14.8 million rights issue after banks and underwriters failed to agree terms.

However, it said it had agreed new facilities with a group of four banks, led by the National Westminster, extending to the end of

March, 1993. The rights issue, announced on February 21, was intended to reduce debts and enable it to support the activities of Rayner Coffee International, its loss-making 45 per cent-owned coffee trading associate, which had been adversely affected by a sharp fall in coffee prices.

Berisford said that the need for the rights issue funds was

less urgent as the coffee market had now stabilised and steps had been taken to restructure the RCI trading book after the appointment of a new chairman and a group managing director. Talks had made good progress and were expected to result in the sale of a number of subsidiaries.

Borrowings of RCI's trading operations in London and New York have been reduced by more than \$30 million. The maximum level of RCI's permitted borrowings guaranteed by Berisford has been reduced by \$10 million to \$105 million, of which \$88 million is currently drawn. RCI will seek to extend its banking facilities, which run until the end of June.

Berisford's new facilities, coupled with RCI's improved position, are considered adequate to support trading requirements and for Berisford to provide appropriate financial support for RCI. Berisford said it would make further asset disposals to facilitate the early repayment of RCI's guaranteed bank borrowings.

Once the RCI guarantee has been removed, Berisford expects to be in a position "to implement a strategy for acquisition and growth". The company has stated its intention to withdraw completely from commodity trading and is likely to dispose of its interest in RCI eventually.

Shares in Berisford rose from 18½p to 20½p. The company was on the brink of receivership in 1990.

Blue Circle sells S African stake

BY JON ASHWORTH

BLUE Circle Industries, Britain's biggest cement producer, has sold a 42 per cent stake in its South African associate company to Murray & Roberts, the republic's largest construction group, for £70 million.

The Blue Circle sale, widely expected, is seen as a cash-raising exercise rather than a case of disinvestment in the region. Blue Circle shares rose 4p to 249p.

The group appears keen to diversify closer to home. In November, it paid £18.7 million for Sweden's largest radiator producer and invested £1.3 million in a joint venture with a Norwegian house-builder last month. The South African sale will provide further funds for expansion.

The Blue Circle deal makes Murray & Roberts one of

South Africa's biggest suppliers of construction materials. The group plans to incorporate Blue Circle's interests into its construction services and materials division and eventually to split them into two units.

Murray & Roberts has the right to continue using the Blue Circle name for three years. David Brink, chief executive of Murray & Roberts, said the company is keen to expand in South Africa and in neighbouring countries, such as Zimbabwe.

Murray & Roberts shares have risen from R50 (approximately £10) to R57 since news of the deal leaked four weeks ago.

Murray & Roberts is controlled by Sanlam, one of South Africa's largest insurance groups.

HK hotel group to seek London listing

FROM LULU YU IN HONG KONG

MANDARIN Oriental, a Hong Kong hotel company, is to follow Jardine Matheson, its parent group, in seeking a primary listing in London. Jardine has applied for a secondary listing in Hong Kong and Mandarin plans to do the same, to create a consistent regulatory framework for the group.

Moving primary listing to London, shifting domicile to Bermuda and diverting assets overseas are among measures the Jardine group has taken with China's 1997 takeover of Hong Kong in mind.

Net profits from Mandarin fell 17 per cent to US\$37.4 million in 1991, Robert Riley, managing director, said

the Gulf war and recession had had a severe impact on international travel.

The company's turnover increased to \$127 million from \$124 million. Operating profit dropped to \$33 million from \$36 million. A final dividend of 3.59 cents will be paid, making a total of 5 cents for the year, as in 1990.

Hongkong and Shanghai Hotels, which is controlled by the Kadoorie family, reported a 6 per cent drop in net profits to HK\$313 million (£23.6 million) for 1991. Its hotels in Asia, particularly the flagship Peninsula, in Hong Kong, performed strongly but those in New York and Beverly Hills, California, remained in the red.

Delayed orders put pressure on Hornby

BY MARTIN BARROW

HORNBY, the toys, hobby and sports boat manufacturer, expects difficult trading conditions to continue this year. Retailers are placing orders later than ever, putting further pressure on working capital.

The single final dividend is being held at 9p for 1991. Pre-tax profits dropped from a revised £4.44 million to £2.09 million on sales down from £39.5 million to £32 million. Earnings fell from 37.7p a share to 15.4p. Comparable figures for 1990 have been adjusted to include an exceptional credit of £616,000.

Jack Strouger, the chairman, said: "We anticipated

that consumer spending would be affected by the recession and took immediate action to contain overheads."

Cash flow remained strong although year-end cash balances fell from £4.9 million to £3.3 million because a greater proportion of sales occurred in November and December, with payment not due until after the year-end. Trade debtors on December 31 owed £6.4 million, a £1.5 million increase, although that was partly offset by a 20 per cent reduction in stocks.

Group operating profits were £2.3 million, down from £4.9 million. Sales of Hornby railways and Scalextric continued to represent more than 60 per cent of sales.

BUSINESS ROUNDUP

New products help Halstead lift payout

HIGHER profits have enabled James Halstead, the floor coverings and rainwear group, to raise its interim dividend, despite what it described as "the worst trading environment for many years". New products from the floor coverings business and production efficiencies helped group pre-tax profits climb from £3.34 million to £3.44 million in the six months to end-December. Turnover edged up from £28.2 million to £28.9 million.

Last year's decision to close Beistaff International, the maker of motorcycle equipment, rain and casual country wear, following continuing losses, will result in extraordinary closure costs of about £3 million in the full-year accounts. Vincent Clare, chairman, said that current trading conditions remain as difficult as last year, although he is optimistic of another satisfactory performance. The interim dividend is being increased to 4.5p, against 4.25p last time. Earnings rise from 14.9p a share to 15.56p.

Packer falls short

KERRY Packer's flotation of his Australian Consolidated Press Group closed yesterday with market sources suggesting there was a serious shortfall in demand. About half of the A\$475 million (£209 million) magazine float was taken up by institutions, but it is understood private investors may have left the other half of the float up to 25 per cent short. Some of Australia's main fund managers did not subscribe. There was a widely-held feeling that the A\$5-a-share offer was fully priced at 13.4 times forecast 1993 earnings, and offered limited scope for profit. Mr Packer, Australia's richest man, will keep a 55 per cent stake in the company.

Fired Earth slides

PRE-TAX profits at Fired Earth Tiles, the Oxfordshire specialist tile retailer, fell to £302,000 in the year to end-December, from £753,000 last time, despite an improvement in turnover from £5.04 million to £5.26 million. The company said overall turnover was static, although sales from the Merchant Tiler shops, which sell less expensive tiles, doubled to £1.8 million, with the average number of outlets increasing from six to ten. Earnings slide to 3.58p a share, down from 8.56p. The board has declared a second interim dividend of 2.4p, instead of the final 2.4p paid last time, making an unchanged total of 4.025p for the year.

Perry takes a tumble

PERRY Group, the multi-franchise motor distributor, is paying an unchanged total dividend for last year despite a 46.7 per cent drop in pre-tax profits to £2.23 million. The group blamed the setback on the recession, which hit Perry's profits from new car sales, truck sales and contract hire. The final dividend is held at 6.25p, making an unchanged total of 9p. Earnings per share dropped from 17.2p to 9.2p. Turnover fell from £328.8 million to £301.1 million. The company said that the new car market was "the smallest in ten years", although used car retailing saw good profit growth.

Sheafbank in the red

SHEAFBANK Property Trust, the property development and financial services group, has cut its final dividend after suffering a pre-tax loss of £993,000 in the year to end-March 1991, compared with a profit of £501,000 previously. There was an exceptional debit of £950,000, relating to a provision against the carrying value of investments in financial services. Gross income fell to £1.17 million (£2.4 million). The final dividend is reduced to 0.1p (0.65p), making a total of 0.2p for the year (0.75p). There is a 6.19p loss per share (2.48p earnings). The company wants to extend the current accounting period to June 1992. The shares lost 2p to 19p.

Bedford trims loss

WILLIAM Bedford, the Unlisted Securities Market quoted antiques dealer, has trimmed pre-tax losses from £258,707 to £210,131 in the year to end-December. Turnover fell from £2.03 million to £1.63 million, as the recession hit the antiques trade. The loss per share is reduced to 2.6p, against a deficit of 4p a share last time. There is again no dividend. William Bedford said the underlying trend showed no sign of recovery in any of the company's markets. The share price fell from 27p to 23p.

Stronger policies on industry urged

BY DEREK HARRIS

A MORE coherent UK industrial policy, especially aimed at winning back lost overseas markets, is urged by the British Chambers of Commerce (BCC).

A BCC discussion paper rejects both the Sixties-style interventionism associated with Labour and the Conservative government's hands-off approach.

The BCC calls for a reversal of Tory plans for restricting the government's role in export credit guarantees. At the same time, however, it wants a continuing process of deregulation and scrapping of red tape.

A more important role for the trade and industry department is urged, raising what the BCC describes as its "fairly low" status within government and increasing its "limited" power to influence policy.

Promotion of small firms should revert to the DTI from the employment department, the BCC suggests.

A more aggressive approach by the government to research and development is advocated through tax incentives, funding and an advisory system.

The strengths of small and medium-sized companies in responding quickly to market demands should be capitalised on, the BCC says. It suggests that the government should ensure there is a sound and accessible system for informing and advising such companies, together with more encouragement for research and development and exporting.

Exporting would benefit from government commitment not only to export credit guarantees but to export market research and support for trade missions, the BCC believes.

It wants to see a "coherent, co-ordinated and integrated framework of government policies across the wide range of factors affecting commerce and industry". These include

education and training, technology and innovation and investment.

The BCC recipe for improving the climate for investment is lower inflation, reduced taxation and more stable interest rates.

Richard Brown, director of policy at the BCC, said: "Industry and government must work together towards the common goal of sustainable growth."

A Basis for an Industrial Policy £10 from BCC, 9 Tufton Street, London SW1P 3QB.

Brussels to lift oil ban on Pretoria

FROM OUR CORRESPONDENT IN BRUSSELS

THE European Community is likely to lift its embargo on oil exports to South Africa within the next month, according to sources close to the EC's Portuguese presidency.

EC foreign ministers will probably formally lift the embargo at their meeting in Brussels on April 6. One of the final international sanctions against Pretoria will have been lifted, a move which will have a significant effect on the oil markets, as South Africa has started using its strategic oil reserves built up after sanctions were imposed in 1985.

Foreign oil accounts for only 6 per cent of South Africa's energy imports. "We are a coal economy," said one South African official yesterday.

The country has also begun producing its own oil at three sites near Johannesburg. These are believed to produce about 10 million tons a year, although the government's Petroleum Act bars all publication of oil statistics, including the size of the oil reserves.



Brittan: market forces should drive down costs

EC to make it cheaper to change money

FROM TOM WALKER IN BRUSSELS

A "USERS" charter, outlining the rights of small businesses and individuals to a more equitable system of cross-border bank transfer charges, will be unveiled by the European Commission next week.

The commission has been aware for a long time that a big consumer concern about the barrier-free market of 1993 is that one of its main tenets — the free movement of capital — is impinged on by the existence of nine different currencies.

A survey by the European Consumers' Union this year found that a traveller setting off with £100 ended up with £50 after nine border changes.

Big companies tend not to be so affected because they often get better deals. The

commission will recommend that banks publish the time and cost of cross-border transactions so that consumers can shop around for the best deal.

Sir Leon Brittan, the EC competition commissioner, says that market forces will then drive down costs naturally. However, if that is not the case, the commission will consider introducing legislation.

The commission estimates that around 200 million transactions of less than 2,500 euros (£1,780) are made across the EC's borders annually — a figure that is certain to increase when trade barriers come down from January 1. The fee for each payment varies between £7 and £40 depending on the urgency of the

transfer and whether the sender wants to pay the receiving bank's fees. That means international transfers cost about 20 times as much as domestic payments.

London-based bank executive, who worked on one of the commission's advisory committees on bank charges, said there were three problems in cross-border banking: the need to report bank transactions to a central authority, the high cost of telecommunications, and the differences in legal systems.

He said that increased harmonisation would gradually whittle away all three. "And with the advent of a single currency most of these problems will disappear anyway," he added.

BUSINESS PROFILE: Sir Christopher Benson

Rebuilding from shattered dreams

The chairman of MEPC, the property group, tells Gillian Bowditch how he succeeded in his second-choice career

When Sir Christopher Benson was barely 20, a serious car accident put paid to his career plans. The Royal Navy, which he had wanted to join ever since he first donned a sailor suit, was no longer an option. His cherished dream of playing rugby for England shattered with the windscreen of his MG sports car.

For a second choice of career he has not done at all badly. As chairman of MEPC, Britain's second largest property group, he is arguably the most senior establishment figure in the British property industry. He was knighted in 1988 at the age of 40 for services to the industry as chairman of London Docklands Development Corporation. Along the way, he has added the chairmanship of Boots, the retail group, a directorship of the Royal Opera House and the chairmanship of the Housing Corporation to his impressive curriculum vitae. His achievements are a testimony to his tenacity, a trait recognised by himself and colleagues who know him well. On the whole, however, Sir Christopher's image of himself and the image he projects differ markedly. He describes himself as "not a very warm person, not very lovable".

He describes his friends as few and his acquaintances as many. However, acquaintances who clearly count themselves as friends talk warmly of him. In an industry not known for its altruism, Sir Christopher is described as a man of integrity and sensitivity. Trevor Osborne, chairman of Speyside, says: "He is always keen to help and I have never seen him treat anyone as anything other than an equal." Sir Christopher is perceived as supremely competent but he is self-effacing and keen to point out any little failures on the path of his success. He admits to an impulsive, impatient streak. "I'm not patient with the people that matter and perhaps I'm over-patient with people that matter less. I spend a long time listening to the problems

of people I don't love and then expect too much of the people I do love." He has two sons, Charles and Julian. The latter says: "He's not icy but I think he is more responsive to strangers than others might be. Emotionally, he's independent. He wouldn't bring a problem to myself or my brother. He would do it to my mother, but it would have to be a serious problem. He's very resilient but he derives an enormous amount of support from her."

Resilience has been a feature of his life. He was born in Staffordshire in 1933, the son of a dentist, and attended the local Church of England school. After failing to get into grammar school, he moved to Worcester Cathedral King's School where he says he played rugby and was a "county champion". "I was academically bone idle," he says. "Looking back, I am cross with myself for not using the brain God had given me." Swimming was one way of avoiding academic classes and, as a boy, he was a county champion.

'I learned my business by pretending I knew what to do until I did'

a potential Olympic swimmer for about 30 minutes," he says. In 1947, he joined The Incorporated Thames Nautical Training College HMS Worcester, where he was given a beating on his first day for walking instead of running. His idea was to use the training college as a route into the Royal Navy but while he was there the Royal Navy class was dropped and his hopes were dashed.

He left at 16 and joined the Union Castle line as a cadet. His first 48 hours were spent loading spirits. "I learned in my first few hours how to drop a case on its side and break the bottles. I regretted it from the minute I joined but there were wonderful moments. Silly little things like watching dolphins playing in front of the bows of the ship and seeing sunrise and sunset at sea. There were also miserable things like using the heavy detergent paste, which took the skin off your hands, to clean the work."

After two-and-a-half years of seeing the world, he left, still hankering after the Royal Navy. After a short spell as an agricultural surveyor, he joined up for National Service. Pursuing the idea of a permanent commission, he arrived in Lissiemouth, Gran-pire, where he was selected to play rugby for the Royal Navy Scotland. "I was very happy there. I had a real chance of getting a trial to play rugby for England."

The happiness was short lived. After a party, he drove his girlfriend and his friend, Hardy, home to the naval base. "Normally on those sort of jaunts you'd festoon the car with just everybody clinging on and go home absolutely pie-eyed. Whilst everybody tells me I was drunk, I was not. I can remember exactly how much I had to drink," he says.

Hardy was navigating and instead of directing the car onto the main runway at the base, he guided it on to the perimeter track. They started to go round a bend and collided with a huge mound of gravel. The passengers fell out and the car landed on Sir Christopher. "I skidded along the road for a time," he says. "I knew that this chap called Miles was driving an



Down on the farm: Sir Christopher and his wife, Jo, the "greatest influence" in his life

old spider Bugatti just behind us with dozens of people in the car. I started crawling. I couldn't walk. I was deaf in one ear and had lost part of my face. I thought I was dead for a time and then I realised I was hurting. Luckily, the headlights of my car were still working, shining up into the air, and Miles slowed down and stopped just by me."

His girlfriend escaped with only a cut but Sir Christopher and Hardy were taken to hospital, written off for dead. His mother failed to recognise him when she came to visit. Two years of plastic surgery with Harold Gillies, the famous plastic surgeon, followed. "He made me watch my last operation. He gave me a good scrub and he gave me a mirror. I didn't think I could watch it but by the end I was totally detached. I got in the car and drove back to Worcester and went to a cocktail party." His physical recovery has been remarkable although one eye is lazy and he remains deaf in one ear. Psycho-

logically, the healing process took longer.

"I was pretty shocked by what I looked like," he says. "I went to a hunt ball after I came out of hospital and got as far as the bar. While I was there, supping my pint of beer out of the corner of my mouth, a girl with whom I had been very familiar came through the door. She was well-oiled and she said: 'Jesus Christ, why do they let people like that in here.' She didn't even recognise me."

"That knocked my confidence entirely and I slowed down at the bridge over the river Severn on the way home and thought 'Dear God it is always going to be like this.' It didn't actually occur to me to throw myself off, but later I thought it was significant that I slowed down at the bridge." His tenacity and the support of his father, whom he describes as a patient, reassuring man, helped him through. He joined a firm of agricultural valuers, working as an agricultural auctioneer in Salisbury, Wiltshire. His impatience at the lack of finding a partnership as an agricultural surveyor and a

growing realisation that as the cattle auctions moved out of their traditional town centre venues, something could be done to redevelop them, led him into the world of property.

"I came up to London and I learned my business as a town centre redeveloper by just pretending I knew what to do until I did," he says. He also met Sam Chipendale of Arndale, the legendary developer. The two worked together until 1969 when a disagreement over the Arndale Centre in Poole, Dorset, led to Sir Christopher setting up Dolphin Developments on his own.

"The first year was pretty miserable. I came to the conclusion I'd done the wrong thing when I couldn't afford to buy the children Christmas presents. Then in December, a deal came up with Sun Alliance. They were very generous and we had a partnership. I did all but one of my developments with them." He has maintained close links with the insurance company and is now on the board. He met his wife, Jo, in Salisbury and they ended up living in the house in which she was born. She is a Justice of the Peace and works on behalf of a number of charities, notably those involved with cancer research and the elderly. At the time they met, she was chairman of the Young Conservatives.

"I was a bit frightened of her," Sir Christopher says. "She was establishment and I was not. We sort of drifted together. It was quite a job to get her to marry me but she has been the greatest influence in my life."

In 1973, he sold his company to The Law Land Company and retired for six weeks on the proceeds. However, ambition and the need to be doing something drove him back into business. He joined MEPC, the property group, as development director when it was suffering in the 1974 crash. The group had over-extended itself to the extent that some of its property ventures in Oxford Street were greater than the capital value of the group. Along with David Davies, the property entrepreneur, he travelled the world persuading banks to back the company. Sir Christopher and Davies were joint vice-chairmen of MEPC and despite cosy, weekly dinners, they knew there was not room for

both of them in the group. "He was much brighter than me but I was street wise," Sir Christopher says. "He had a terrific temper. He always wants his own way and will show it. I want my own way but have learned not to show it." Davies left to join Hong Kong Land and Sir Christopher became managing director and then chairman of MEPC in 1988, the year after he had taken on Harry Hyams, the powerful property magnate. Sir Christopher acquired Hyams' company, Oldham Estate, in a hostile £530 million deal, which, at the time, was the biggest property takeover in British history.

Sir Christopher's cultured image and impeccable manners, coupled with his genuine concern over social issues, have led some to regard him as a soft touch, but his son, Julian, insists he is no push-over. "I sometimes tell him he is Norman Tebbit without the jack boots. He is no bleeding heart but I think he occasionally feels an ironic juxtaposition between his concern for the homeless and his job as a property developer. He is sensitive and he has a low emotional threshold. Although he is easily moved, he has a limited emotional vocabulary. He doesn't reveal his vulnerabilities. He is capable of immense moral courage."

Friends find it difficult to imagine him retiring. Osborne says: "He is so keen to get involved that I sometimes think he would like to be chairman of everything." In his spare time, Sir Christopher tends his 350 acre farm in Wiltshire, tries to attend every production at the Royal Opera House and flies helicopters and small planes. "Flying is a get-away-from-it-all hobby," Julian says.

Sir Christopher says: "I used to not like ballet at all. I think it is this male problem of seeing men leap around all over the stage." Now, his favourite ballet is Manon. "I suppose that makes me a double romantic," he says. He has a great deal of charm and it is easy to believe he has a romantic streak. "I haven't got a grand life plan but if I see something needs to be done I'll try to do it," he says. "I am determined but not in that sort of boorish, push-people-out-of-the-way sense. I don't mind if everyone else comes with me, it's quite fun if they do, but I am determined to get there whatever."

WEEK ENDING Matthew Bond

A marriage arranged behind Chinese walls

ROMANCE is dead, the fairy tale is over. Marriages, it seems, are not made in heaven, or come to that in deep-sea, royalist Berkshire. But lovers of the happy ending need not despair. For they are, it seems, still very much made in Hong Kong.

Or they are this week. Who knows what the next few months will bring? Predictability is in distinctly short supply when you are dealing with two emotional individuals like the Midland and Hongkong and Shanghai Banks, the Burton and Taylor of the banking world. Just about the one thing that has been certain over the years of their tempestuous affair is that nothing can be banked on... particularly at the Midland, whose carefree if-you've-got-it, lend-it lifestyle has seen off so many would-be suitors.

In the City of London, an unofficial investigation has already begun into why the fact that the on-off romance was back on again was not emblazoned two days before the £3 billion engagement was officially confirmed. Stock market aides are said to be furious about missing out on the enormous profits that could have been made by a well timed leak.

The early findings of the investigation suggest that neither side hired a professional public relations firm especially for the job. Angry stock market sources say that the Midland ought to have known better and that the Hongkong bank's failure to seek PR advice demonstrates its fundamental unsuitability as a member of the British financial community.

But William Purves, head honcho at Honkers and Shakers, is too ardent a suitor to be deterred by such idle tittle-tattle. After years of searching the world for the perfect domicile - sorry, partner - he is not going to allow the bank of his dreams to get away. But then Sir Peter Walters, his opposite number at Midland, is hardly

playing hard to get. His "I almost certainly will" is about as near as a banker gets to a straight yes.

The two banks are already pretty intimately acquainted, having indulged in quite a bit of illicit pre-merger asset shuffling in the wake of their original engagement announcement five years ago. But even second time around, the elaborate foreplay - due diligence is such a tawdry phrase - required for this exotic union means that final consummation may not take place until July. But can



the path of true love remain smooth for so long?

The Midland could get a bad case of post-electoral depression, especially if the deposits now growing in its savings accounts are bulk-transferred to the Inland Revenue. Regulators could also withhold consent to wit, not unreasonably, the Bank of England, and to woo, far less reasonably, the Chinese government.

The idea that the fate of one of Britain's high street banks could be determined by those well known proponents of free enterprise in Peking is, to say the very least, an unlikely one. But perhaps it should not be rejected out of hand. For in 1992, the Hang Seng index, that barometer of Hong Kong's financial

well-being, has moved just one way - steeply upwards. In three months, it has risen by over 16 per cent, with the market apparently unconcerned by the prospect of the Chinese takeover in 1997. Compare that with the performance of London's Footsie, which has done little but fall since Mr Major's visit to the Queen raised the spectre of a Labour takeover.

The clear answer to the City's woes therefore is to call off the election campaign and embark instead on a rolling programme of collectivisation, with control of most of Britain's leading financial institutions passing gradually to the Chinese.

The Chinese seem to be preparing for a more active role in western life. Despite reports that Chinese journalists had been instructed to expose the weaknesses of western democracy, a new wave of objectivity appears to be emerging. The Guangming Daily's headline "The British dream of owning one's house is shattered" seems less party dogma and more fair comment - albeit three weeks early.

Clearly the writers of the Guangming Daily have been quicker than the British electorate to understand the full implications of John Smith's shadow budget. Even some loyal Labour supporters seemed to have missed the "pip-squeaking" message Mr Smith - the Leona Helmsley of domestic fiscal policy - dispatched to Britain's middle class. David Goldstone, for example, the Welsh business wizard behind Regalian Properties, was one of the signatories to a letter to this newspaper supporting the Labour cause. The one slight surprise is that Regalian's best known asset is a block of 20 unsold, luxury flats overlooking Kensington Gardens with an average price of £5 million. Now, either Mr Goldstone has sold the entire block to the board of the Hongkong and Shanghai Bank, or conviction politics is coming very expensive these days.

Fraud 'is mostly in-house'

BY GRAHAM SEARJEANT

MOST large-scale fraud on companies is internal and management is responsible for extracting three times as much money as other employees, according to an analysis of 279 cases between 1987 and 1991 when criminal charges were brought relating to fraud totalling almost £1.2 billion.

KPMG Forensic Accounting, the fraud department of KPMG Peat Marwick, the accountant, found that fraud by outsiders, including frauds on the public, accounted for 40 per cent or more of cases involving at least £100,000. The number of such fraud cases, which was stable at less than 50 a year in 1987-9, jumped to more than 70 a year as the recession started.

Some of the increase involved gangs, including mortgage fraud conspiracies, which were discovered by the fall in house prices.

Ian Huntington, fraud specialist partner at KPMG, who is on secondment to the Serious Fraud Office, said companies were most vulnerable in periods of change such as when they made acquisitions, sold or closed businesses, or made key employees redundant, particularly middle managers who oversaw anti-fraud systems.

Management controls tended to be slack in such periods and some managers or employees either engaged in fraud or turned a blind eye.

THE SUNDAY TIMES

No-one knows quite what to expect from Hong Kong & Shanghai. The bank is perhaps best known for some peculiar traditions which give away its colonial history. Staff are discouraged from marrying before the age of 25 and there is always curry for lunch on Thursdays... Business Focus - The Sunday Times tomorrow

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TEMPUS

Market scents Redland victory

STEETLEY has had a harrowing few months defending itself against the unwanted £612 million assault from Redland but its days of independence are probably nearing an end as the bid heads for Thursday's final closing date.

Redland has cleverly outmanoeuvred its opponent, helped by a strong run of good luck. Steetley was always fighting at a disadvantage, tied more closely to the battered British building market and lacking Redland's international spread, the company had little to look forward to over the next two years but failing profits.

A clearly defensive merger of the British building materials' interests of Steetley and Tarmac fell foul, probably wrongly, of the Office of Fair Trading, while the Redland bid went through the regulatory hoop with few problems.

No white knight bidder appeared on the scene, although Minorco and ECC Group were rumored contenders, and Steetley suffered the misfortune of losing its broker at the later stages of the bid. But it was

the long-awaited final defence document that undermined Steetley. That allowed the bidder to get away with a minor tweak upwards of the terms after its target, having raised expectations of a hefty asset revaluation, was forced to admit a £40 million hole in the accounts from a French acquisition in 1990.

Redland is offering 87 new shares for every 100 in Steetley. There is a 365p cash alternative, and the offer values each Steetley share at 379p. The Steetley price is pitched at 370p, a clear indication that the market scents a Redland victory. Further weakness could push the price to below the cash alternative, allowing Redland to buy heavily in the market.

Placing a bet on the building sector ahead of the election is not easy. Nervous investors in Redland should smile while the price remains above the cash alternative. The new Redland shares, however, have the support of a 7.8 per cent yield to the Steetley investor swapping into them and are likely to prove attractive to the institutions.

Molins restarts

MOLINS' share price has remained remarkably strong over the past four months, even though Leucadia, the American financial group which had long rattled the takeover cage, quit Molins' share register last November.

Investment will follow from here on the grounds that Molins is a start-up situation. Pre-tax profits in the year to December were slightly ahead at £15.5 million, against £15.2 million on turnover up from £136.8 million to £155 million.

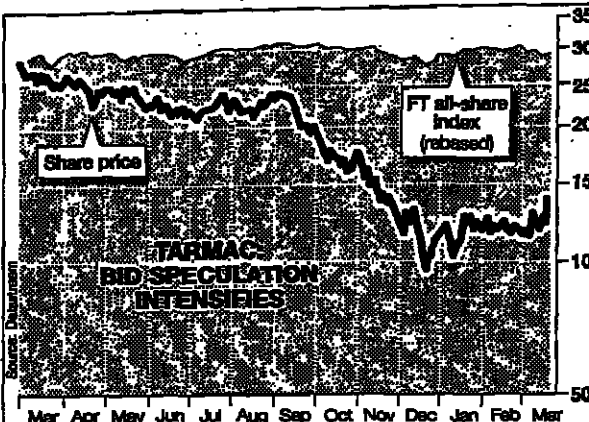
The 1991 profits advance owes more to a fall in the interest charge, to £3.3 million from £3.6 million, than to improvements at the operating level, where higher profits from packaging machinery were undone by weaker profits from tobacco machinery.

There was a repeated £3.2 million credit in 1991 from Molins' pension funds, which at January 1 had combined surpluses of £38 million. How the company, and the scheme members, can best benefit from such surpluses is being worked out, though 1992 could see net earnings checked because the incidence of loss from the pension credit could be greater than the interest savings.

Trading conditions remain difficult, the order book is sound, and the total dividend, which rises from 12p to 12.75p a share, is well covered by net earnings of 37.3p a share.

Pre-tax profits may inch forward to £16 million, and at 385p the shares trade on a shade over 10 times prospective earnings. Hold.

Opinion poll worries pull down shares and bonds



GOVERNMENT bonds and share prices were again on the slide. Investors were worried by the possibility of at least half a dozen opinion polls being published over the weekend showing a sizeable Labour lead.

Financial markets have found themselves at the mercy of the polls since the date for the election was confirmed last week. The equity market has been forced to contend with violent fluctuations.

The FT-SE 100 index saw an early rise wiped out and, at one stage, was more than 20 points down after City economists judged the latest inflation figures to be disappointing. It finished 11 points lower at 2,456.6, a fall on the week of only 19.4.

This is one trading account that both brokers and investors will be glad to see the back of. Market-makers have spent their time staying out of trouble. The fall over the past two weeks has been 76.5.

Government securities managed to claw back some of this week's heavy losses, with rises of 1/4 at the longer end, despite another uncertain performance by the pound and the first signs of upward pressure on interest rates.

Political worries were again to the fore among the privatised companies. In the water sector, losses were recorded in Anglian, 3p to 32p. North West, 3p to 34p. Severn Trent, 5p to 31p. South West, 3p to 33p. Thames, 2p to 34p. Welsh, 2p to 36p. and Yorkshire, 6p to 35p.

Electricity distributors were also suffering as Eastern fell 4p to 22p, East Midlands, 5p to 22p, London, 3p to 25p, Manweb, 4p to 28p, Midlands, 2p to 24p, Northern, 4p to 24p, North West, 2p to 26p, Southern, 5p to 23p, South Wales, 4p to 28p and the Electricity Package fell 4p to £2.43.

The generators also found the going hard. National

Power ended 3p cheaper at 190p. PowerGen was down 2p at 201p. Scottish Hydro 2p at 97p and Scottish Power 1p at 95p.

Speculative buying continued to drive Tarmac, the builder and building products group, sharply higher in

that the dramatic drop in Tarmac's price during the past year, its loss of top 100 status and the referral of the proposed merger of its building products interests with those of Steetley, have left the group vulnerable to a bid.

Minorco, the Luxembourg-

based minerals group, with its large cash resources, remains top of the list of predators.

There was selective support elsewhere in the building sector. Pilkington, an old takeover favourite, advanced 6p

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THE TIMES SATURDAY MARCH 21 1992

Good faith v self-interest



LINDSAY COOK
WEEKEND MONEY EDITOR

Self-regulation of the investment industry will be put to the test in the coming months as the regulators and their members discuss how the Clucas report should be implemented. Sir Kenneth Clucas wants to put the interests of investors first, but it will be the self-interested investment companies that will have the final say about whether this can be achieved.

The Clucas report calls for one regulatory body to control the activities of any company selling investments to the public. This seems so natural that investors can only wonder that companies have a multitude of options at the moment and the ability to move from one regulator to another when things get too hot.

It does not help that they all have odd acronyms and lousy complaints departments staffed by people who seem only too willing to take the word of the member against that of a paying member of the public.

The current regulators complain about the cost of protecting

investors, but it is the clients who really pay and, therefore, they should be allowed to call the tune. Investors will not be a party to the discussions but they can make it known to their brokers, insurance companies and anyone else who is prepared to listen that they want a simple and straightforward regulatory system that has as a first priority honest dealing with consumers.

It would also be helpful if a single retail regulator set up under the new system had a proper name and not another mind-boggling acronym.

If the proposals go ahead, consumers will finally have more of a say, but until then they must wait on the sidelines and hope that the investment industry is as keen to regulate bad practices as the public is for them to be outlawed.

If investment managers and life

companies manage to scupper the proposals or water them down so that they do not risk outside interference in the long-term, the only alternative will be an end to self-regulation. Investors want to have confidence in the companies they hand over their money to, and in the bodies that keep a check on them.

If they feel they are in cahoots, it is like suspecting that the police are keeping in check the amount of burglary being carried out on their patch rather than trying to stop it altogether.

Only the greedy who give the

industry a bad name will be punished.

In bondage

Once again it was journalists who spotted the dubious practices of salesmen ahead of the regulators. The Life Assurance and Unit Trust Regulatory Organisation, alerted to the way with-profits bonds were being sold as alternatives to building society accounts, has now acted.

The regulator is finding out just

what life companies and their salesmen are telling customers. When it has the details, Lauto may well decide that the information was not good enough and that compensation will have to be paid to people who have been misled.

Weekend Money first gave a warning about the selling of the bonds last August when it reported on the case of a widow who was advised to take all her savings out of a building society and put them into a bond. No mention had been made of the fact that she should regard it as a long-term investment or the return would be reduced.

With such hard sell going on it is not surprising that life companies have received £3 billion into their coffers as building society and bank savings rates have fallen. How many of the investors understand the product

remains to be seen. Some readers had been led to think they had locked in at guaranteed interest rates of 10 per cent and more. Since then, the rates have fallen.

Most investors are blissfully unaware that they have been sold the wrong product until they try to cash it in. So far, it is early days for that but next year is likely to see a growing number of dissatisfied bondholders. Those who complain are often made to feel they were in the wrong when they were persuaded to move their money. In most cases, it is the word of an inexperienced customer against that of a trained salesman.

Lauto will have to dig deep to ensure that something approaching the truth is reached when deciding whether compensation is deserved. After all, some investors may be looking for an escape, even though they were sold the bonds properly. The regulator will need all the information it can get. Any home-made additions to the official marketing material should be submitted to the organisation to help in its research.

Low values stall house sales

Cautious surveyors are spoiling recovery hopes in the property market. Sara McConnell reports

THE threat of being sued by lenders and insurance companies is causing surveyors to downvalue properties and dashing any hopes of an imminent recovery in the housing market.

Lenders suffering losses on repossessed properties are claiming on indemnity insurance for the difference between the resale price and the mortgage, and turning for compensation to surveyors who valued properties during the housing boom.

Many cases have been settled out of court and surveyors are now putting very

cautious values on properties for fear that they will be sued on the strength of the lender's valuations. The low

valuations can prevent sales going ahead for first-time buyers wanting to borrow 90 or 95 per cent of the purchase price.

Some builders claim that surveyors seem to be valuing automatically at a fixed percentage below the price. If the seller is unable or unwilling to accept the valuation and reduce the price, the deal may fall through because the lender will not lend more than the price put on the property by the valuer.

All buyers have to pay for a basic mortgage valuation of a property by the lender. This tells the lender that the property will be adequate security for the loan.

Low valuations are contributing to delays in the upturn of a housing market, which, it seems, will have to manage without much help from either a Conservative or a Labour government.

Neither party's Budget announced hoped-for measures to increase the amount of tax relief on mortgage interest payments, particularly for first-time buyers. There was also no cut in interest rates, which some lenders were confidently predicting.

The trend towards lower valuations has increased steadily over the past two years since the end of the housing boom, says the Royal Institute of Chartered Survey-

ors (RICS), which represents valuers. Valuers are now nervous of being accused of misvaluations by lenders who advanced money for mortgages freely in 1988 and 1989, then claimed that valuers put too high a price on properties.

Claims on valuers' professional indemnity insurance, which covers them against claims of professional negligence, have soared. RICS Insurance Services, which has about 50 per cent of the valuers' professional indemnity insurance market, said that claims coming through on work done by valuers in 1988 and 1989 totalled £17.5 million in 1990 compared with £6 million in 1989.

Claims in 1987-8, in 1987-8, relating to work done in 1986-7 were just £2.5 million. There were 700 notifications, or allegations of negligence, in 1990. Jeremy Mortimer, RICS Insurance Services' managing director, said 90 per cent of these were claims relating to incorrect valuations. Very few cases reach court.

Mr Mortimer said: "Lenders are repossessing property and not selling it for anything near the valuation figure, but this doesn't necessarily mean the valuer was wrong in 1988-9. There was a lot of pressure on valuers; lenders were wanting to lend more, borrowers were wanting to borrow more and there was a lot of work done. Sometimes safety checks went out of the window and lenders were happy to accept valuations done by valuers from outside the area."

Pamela Hirst, the RICS's director of standards and practice, said: "It is very difficult valuing in this market. When the market was rising this masked the problem." First-time buyers and borrowers with little cash to put down as a deposit are being hardest hit by low valuations, estate agents say. If they are pinning their

hopes on borrowing more than 90 per cent of the value of the property and the seller refuses to lower the price, the buyer is unlikely to be able to bridge the gap.

Tony Clark, general secretary of the National Association of Estate Agents, said: "Low valuations are a bit of a blight on the property market at the moment. A lot of sales are falling through. If you are looking at a 95 per cent mortgage, you could have a lot of problems."

Estate agents say they have sympathy with valuers but that they are concerned how many deals are being lost through low valuations. Dudley Gillham, sales director at John Payne, the independent London estate agent, said that properties were frequently being downvalued to between 5 and 10 per cent below the price agreed by the seller and the buyer. Mr Gillham said: "Valuers rarely talk to us at the office although they should ask us for comparable prices and also talk to other local agents. The warning sign for us is when they just say 'What's the sale price?'"

Lenders agree that downvaluing of properties is not helping the housing market, but deny that they are partly responsible for this by



Surveying the scene: David Warnock, of John Payne, estate agents, values a property. Some companies, however, are being over-cautious

alleging misvaluations, and pushing nervous valuers to claim on their insurance.

David Gilchrist, general manager at the Halifax building society, the largest mortgage lender, said: "Valuers are being more cautious in the interests of buyers themselves. Lenders want to lend and we wouldn't put pressure on valuers."

The Abbey National, the second-largest lender, has written to all its surveyors assuring them that it would not take action against them for misvaluation unless the values were substantially out of line.

John Cox, the Abbey's chief surveyor, said: "Down-valuations and overvaluations are equally damaging. We are anxious to do mortgage business and anxious that we shouldn't kill the housing recovery. We do get appeals and we worry about too cautious a valuation."

The Nationwide said that "a reasonable view by a reasonable valuer couldn't be the subject of a professional indemnity claim". However, John Hutchinson, Nationwide's retail operations director, said that the society would "contemplate" lending 100 per cent of the value of a property if it had been valued at less than the agreed price.

Insult and injury in the numbers game

LAST September, Julie Foster and Stephen Smith had their offer of £45,995 accepted on a new two-bedroom semi-detached home in Wisbech, Cambridgeshire. As first-time buyers, they had stretched themselves as far as they could, saving up £4,600 and applying for a mortgage of 90 per cent of the home's value. When they applied to the Alliance & Leicester for a mortgage, however, the valuer said the property was worth £44,000 (Sara McConnell writes).

This was adding insult to injury as far as Ms Foster and Mr Smith were concerned, as the Alliance & Leicester had already kept them waiting "well over a month", asking to see Mr Smith's accounts because he was self-employed, and asking them to take out mortgage protection insurance.

Finally, the society insisted that they open an Alliance & Leicester savings account to invest their deposit, and gave them no access to it for ten days until the cheque had cleared. Ms Foster said: "We

did all that; we were so desperate. Then they went and downvalued the house."

The couple's mortgage broker, Whitechurch Securities of Bristol, approached the Nationwide on their behalf. However in a matter of days, the Nationwide came back with a valuation of £44,500, still too low for Ms Foster and Mr Smith.

"We were already putting down as much as we could and we started thinking that there must be something wrong with the house," Ms Foster said.

There were further delays while Whitechurch Securities approached National & Provincial. Although the valuation was still lower than the agreed price, N&P offered the couple a 93 per cent mortgage, which, coupled with their deposit, covered the cost and preserved their first-time buyers' discount.

The whole process took nearly four months. Ms Foster and Mr Smith would also have had to pay three sets of valuation fees at £105 a time, had the developer of the prop-

erty not paid one set and Whitechurch Securities the other.

Philip and Pauline Whitehead would also have faced fees for two valuations if they had not had one set paid by the builder of their new two-bedroom, end-of-terrace house.

The Bradford & Bingley building society valued the house at £40,000, a full £7,000 less than the £46,995 they had agreed to pay for it. The Whiteheads needed a 90 per cent mortgage and were in a position to move quickly, as Mr Whitehead was being relocated and their existing home was being sold by Blackhorse Agencies' relocation service.

It was not until the National & Provincial revalued the property at £46,995 that the Whiteheads could afford to move. Mrs Whitehead said: "We wouldn't have been able to afford to move if we had not got the new valuation. If it hadn't been a new property we would have had to pay two sets of valuation fees."

Electing for fixed-rate loans

By Lindsay Cook, Money Editor

THOSE who chose fixed-rate mortgages in the run-up to the last general election in 1987 are thousands of pounds better off if they had chosen to guarantee their mortgage rate for five years.

Over the period, the average mortgage rate has been 12.7 per cent, while there were five-year fixed-rate mortgages at 9.8 per cent available at the time of the election. This week, as lenders suggested that interest rates could rise if there were a change of government or prolonged political uncertainty, new fixed-rate loans were being offered.

The Halifax building society, the largest mortgage lender, has launched a five-year mortgage fixed until March 31, 1997. This is likely to see borrowers through until after the next election. The endowment, personal equity plan and pension mortgages are fixed at 10.8 per cent (an annual percentage rate of 11.6 per cent). This is slightly below its standard mortgage rate of 10.95 per cent but higher than discounted rates for large loans and first-time buyers.

On Tuesday, the Halifax withdrew its loans fixed until April 1995 at 10.4 per cent (APR 11.5 per cent).

The five-year fix has a £250 arrange-

ment fee and redemption penalties of up to five months' interest, depending on when the loan is paid up. After February 1994, borrowers will be able to transfer the fixed-rate loan to another property.

The Woolwich building society has a five-year fixed-rate mortgage at 10.55 per cent (APR 11.8 per cent). Launched in January, the rate is available on endowment or pension loans. There is an application fee of £195 and early redemption penalties.

Barclays' five-year fixed-rate mortgages expire on March 31, 1997. These are at 10.6 per cent (11.2 per cent APR on endowment and pension loans) and 11.3 per cent on repayment loans.

The bank has fixed-rate loans, also at 10.6 per cent, to the end of March 1995 and 1994. It is currently looking at a ten-year mortgage. The application fee of £150 on the loans is waived if the borrower takes out some form of Barclays insurance. The early redemption penalty on the three and two-year guaranteed loans is two months' interest. In the first two years of the five-year fix the penalty is five months' interest. It then reduces to three months. Barclays

said fixed-rate loans were very popular with 20,000 borrowers opting for them in the last 12 months.

National Westminster Bank is offering five-year loans at 10.65 per cent and ten-year fixes at 10.7 per cent. First-time buyers will not be charged the £300 arrangement fee. There is a three-month interest redemption penalty on the five-year and six months on the ten-year.

The Birmingham Midshires building society has a loan which is fixed at 10.35 per cent until July 31, 1993, and then at 9.9 per cent until a year later. The APR is 11.4 per cent and the arrangement fee is £195. It is also offering a five-year fix at 10.45 per cent with an arrangement fee of £295. Nationwide closed its fixed-rate mortgage offer of 9.95 per cent for three years last week. It allocated £250 million in three weeks.

Abbey National withdrew two of its fixed-rate mortgages last week. These were over three and five years at 10.55 per cent and 10.8 per cent. The fixed rate at 10.9 per cent until May 1999 is still available. The bank yesterday launched a four-year fix-rate at 10.99 per cent.

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Banks accused of sabotaging recovery with increased charges

Retailers threaten card boycott

By Liz Dolan

SHOPPERS might have to throw away their plastic cards and dig out their old cheque books if a battle between retailers and banks over charges remains unresolved. Retailers say they might refuse to accept debit and credit cards if proposed increases in bank charges for servicing card transactions are not reduced to what they consider reasonable levels.

Mike Wilsey, of the British Retail Consortium, which represents 90 per cent of UK retailers, said: "Refusing to accept cards is the ultimate sanction. It is not one our members will undertake lightly but, if cards become prohibitively expensive, and banks remain intransigent, it is a weapon that may have to be used."

He added that cards were more likely to be banned by big retailers, which had more clout. Dual pricing, with retailers charging more for items purchased with cards, was a less attractive option because it put retailers in the firing line, Mr Wilsey said. He denied that banning cards would put them in an equally uncomfortable position with their customers. Differential pricing would be a less efficient way of putting pressure on the banks, he added.

Barclays set the ball rolling last month by announcing that it was increasing charges for processing credit card transactions by an average of 8 per cent. Other clearers are expected to follow Barclays' lead.



Proposals to levy higher charges on debit cards are likely to vex retailers even more, however. The retail consortium claims debit charges could double when annual agreements between retailers and banks come up for renewal.

The Office of Fair Trading announced this week that it was conducting a preliminary enquiry into the question. Mr Wilsey said he was unwilling to halt his campaign while the OFT enquiry was going on. "Some of these increases are coming in on April 1," he said. Retailers argue that they

have already suffered so badly in the recession that higher card charges could inhibit recovery just when the first signs of upturn are emerging.

Banks say they have been hit hard, too. Liz Phillips, of the Credit Card Research Group, said: "Fees charged to retailers have fallen by up to one third over the past three years. The average fee is now 1.6 per cent." In that time, the amount going to acquirers — the bank departments servicing transactions — had fallen by £200 million. A spokesman for National Westminster said: "We are

reviewing our own customer base with a view to increasing charges. We have been losing money over this for some time and we want to put the pricing structure on a more economic footing. Things just can't continue the way they are."

Ms Phillips added: "If charges stay at this level, all the acquirers who came into the market three years ago will simply pile out again. That means less competition, which will push fees higher in the end. In any case, we're only talking about an extra 14p charged on each £100

transaction. It's hardly extortionate, and it's a lot lower than retailers used to have to pay."

She pointed out that retailers had shown themselves "exceedingly reluctant" to adopt dual pricing, which was a viable option for those who really could not afford the new charges.

Lloyds said there would be no need for equivalent increases in its own merchant service fees because its retail customers had always paid a sensible price. "We have never turned in the same losses as our competitors because we never got involved in the competitive pricing of the past few years."

The Midland said its fees were negotiated individually with each retailer. "I don't want to say any more because the whole thing is subject to an enquiry and evidence will have to be submitted to that," a spokesman said.

The popularity of debit cards has soared over the past year. Figures released by Datamonitor, a market survey company, show that the number of cards issued by the two main systems, Switch and Visa Delta (Connect), grew in 1991 by more than 20 per cent to 23 million. The number and value of debit card transactions virtually doubled.

By contrast, credit cards in issue from high street banks fell by at least 3 million. Fear of debt and unwillingness to pay the new annual fees for credit cards are cited as reasons for their decline in popularity.

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Doubts raised over policing sale prices

By Shirley Davenport

PROPOSED new powers for trading standards officers to investigate whether sale prices are genuine may not be enough to curb unscrupulous traders, according to trading standards officials.

The new regulations, which have been suggested by Edward Leigh, the consumer affairs minister, would allow trading standards officers to ask any retailer to justify a discount claim and support it by written records of previous prices.

At present, a trading standards officer can make such a request only on the basis of reasonable doubt, perhaps after monitoring a trader's prices for up to six months, and the onus lies with trading standards to prove customers have been misled.

The trade department expects the draft regulations to be ready for consultation within the next few months. However, they will not insist that traders making price claims must keep records for inspection, only that they pro-

duce any written evidence they have. Trading standards officers, who fear the recession encourages greater exploitation of consumers, say that the proposed regulations will take them no further forward.

Roy Hill, chairman of the Prices Monitoring Committee, said: "It is an improvement on nothing at all. But we still have to prove a trader has committed an offence which means continuing to monitor their prices."

Trading standards officers have also pressed for more controls over the use of inflated "recommended retail prices" or "after-sale prices" but the trade department believes that existing controls are adequate.

Keith Hale, senior executive for the Local Authorities Co-ordinating Body on Food and Trading Standards, said: "Shoppers are told they can make huge savings compared with an after-sale price later. The after-sale prices are hiked up for two or three days be-

fore traders start another promotion. We are at an absolute loss to find any reason why traders should not be better regulated."

He added: "Basically, we would like enforcement authorities to have the same powers as the Advertising Standards Authority, prohibiting anyone from making a claim which cannot be substantiated. The same duty should operate over prices in the high street. It seems iniquitous that people are allowed to continue inventing fictitious higher prices to make discounts appear more generous than they are."

The consumer affairs minister has also been asked to consider revising regulations affecting restaurant service charges. At present, restaurants may choose to impose a fixed cost per head, 10 per cent of the bill, or make it an optional gratuity.

The tourist industry would like one system to operate in a simplified form for the benefit of confused tourists.

Midland merger relief

THIS week's news of the planned merger between the Midland Bank and the Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corporation will have come as a relief to many of the Midland's customers (Liz Dolan writes).

Letters to *Weekend Money* over the past two years have indicated increasing concern among customers about the bank's deteriorating finances. The collapse of other financial organisations, notably the Bank of Credit and Commerce International, have done nothing to improve confidence.

Such fears, though understandable, were unfounded. The Midland was never in any danger of a BCCI-style failure. Norrie Morrison, a banking analyst at Kleinwort Benson Securities, said: "A major bank like this never goes under. The worst that anyone was ever going to have to face was a rights issue, and that was a problem for the shareholders rather than the customers."

The bank's 4 million customers were likely to notice little difference in the way Midland was run, if the HSBC merger went ahead. "It is not like a building society, when members get cash up-front." The Midland name would be retained; the 1,840-strong branch network would continue much as now; interest rates would be unaffected. The same is true for the 150,000 people buying their homes with a Midland mortgage.

The bank said: "Customers should see no change. The only difference will be that they will be banking with the largest group in the UK, and the tenth biggest banking

organisation in the world." The Hongkong and Shanghai was in a strong financial position, he added. Its reserves were not disclosed but the UK regulatory authorities were likely to require it to disclose them before a merger was allowed.

There is, however, speculation that Lloyds, or one of the other clearers, may come in with a rival offer. Lloyds was already being strongly tipped as a possible bidder for the Midland before the HSBC made its move. If such a bid were successful — and some observers doubt it would be allowed — customers would definitely notice changes, though not necessarily of fundamental importance to the day-to-day operation of their accounts. The most obvious would be the closure of a number of branches where both banks had outlets close to each other.

Continental banks have also been cited as possible bidders, as have companies that do not yet have a banking arm, such as BAT Industries, owners of Eagle Star, the insurance company. If any of these businesses made a successful offer for the Midland, other changes are likely to follow.

For now, any counterbid is still in the realms of speculation. Even Lloyds will make no comment on a possible merger. The HSBC offer is the only one on the table. Until 1990, such a plan was unlikely to have stood much of a chance of being approved by the UK authorities because the HSBC was based outside Britain. That was one of the reasons why the Bank of England blocked the Hong Kong bank's offer for the Royal Bank of Scot-

land in 1981. Nine years later, the HSBC set up a British-registered holding company, called HSBC Holdings. It is also expected to move its headquarters to London before the end of the century.

The relationship between the two banking groups goes back a number of years. In 1987, after the Hongkong and Shanghai had built up a 15 per cent holding in the British bank, they agreed on a three-year period of co-operation, during which the HSBC would leave its stake unaltered. The agreement culminated in merger talks 15 months ago, which broke down. This week's announcement of a possible £3.1 billion merger marks the resumption of these talks.

At least the Midland's customers do not now have to face the unlikely prospect of being owned by an advertising group, as was mooted by Saatchi & Saatchi in 1987.

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Lautro warns life offices over bonds sales patter

BY SARA MCCONNELL

LIFE offices have been told to review their marketing of with-profits bonds following widespread concern that they have been wrongly sold as short-term, secure alternatives to building society accounts. In some cases, these reviews will lead to compensation for investors.

The latest enforcement bulletin from the Life Assurance and Unit Trust Regulatory Organisation, the life companies' regulator, tells companies that they must review all their marketing material to make sure it does not give misleading information. They must send a "sunduct report" on the review, along with up-to-date copies of marketing material, within 20 days of receiving the bulletin. This is the first time that Lautro has required its members to submit reports on their marketing literature.

About 20 life offices, including the Prudential, Legal & General, Eagle Star and Sun Life, market these bonds. Since they started being sold in 1989, they have attracted £3 billion from investors. Investments in the bonds are put into funds that invest in a mixture of equities and fixed-interest stocks. But they also attract annual bonuses and a terminal bonus, sometimes from year one, and sometimes after five or ten years in the bond. These bonuses cannot be taken away once awarded, but the rate can be cut in future years.

Lautro says it is particularly concerned that companies are "failing to make it clear that a whole life with-profits

bond is unsuitable as a short-term investment — indeed, sometimes promoting the bond in a way that draws attention to short-term benefits". Salesmen are comparing with-profits bonds with building society accounts without pointing out that bonds are a long-term investment and early surrender loses investors' money, Lautro says.

It also says that life companies and their salesmen are not always fully explaining the factors determining the bond's cash-in value and are not explaining the significance of the company's right to make a market value adjustment to reflect dramatic falls in the stock market.

Existing investors who were sold bonds under the impression that they were short-term investments or that bonuses were guaranteed at current levels will be written to by life offices as early as next month. Some could be paid compensation.

Mike Abrahams, Lautro's chief enforcement officer, said: "We would expect members to treat these cases as complaints. In some cases, there will be compensation. In appropriate cases there will be full compensation with the capital invested returned with interest."

Mr Abrahams said Lautro had been alerted to the problem with with-profits bonds by journalists last September, and that some life offices had already started reviewing their marketing literature.

The Prudential, which has attracted £450 million into



Some compensation: Mike Abrahams, of Lautro

with-profits bonds, making it one of the biggest players in the with-profits bond market, has already had to pay £12,000 compensation to two investors who were sold bonds as a short-term investment.

Tony Kempster, managing director of Prudential's Holborn, the Prudential's broker division, said both investors were clients of an independent financial adviser who had sent out his own marketing literature for the bonds. Mr Kempster said: "The way in which the product was represented was too short-term. With this sort of product you have to look at an investment of at least five years." The company has also reviewed the marketing material of two other advisers out of 1,500.

Mr Kempster said the company had reviewed its marketing material in July and sent it all to Lautro at the end of last year, when the concerns about marketing material first surfaced.

Eagle Star is also confident that it is "taking a prudent and responsible view", but says it is considering writing to all investors who bought bonds directly from the company. Chris Bagguley, Eagle Star's marketing manager, individual business, said: "The whole issue is blowing up because of possible poor

sales practices rather than on untruthful with-profits bonds as a product."

Large sales of with-profits bonds have stretched life office reserves to their utmost at a time when investment reserves from assets are suffering from falls in the stock market. Concern is growing in some quarters that life offices are promising higher bonuses than their reserves can deliver.

Whitechurch Securities, the independent intermediary, gave a warning this week that investors should look at the strength of life company reserves as well as the level of bonus being offered. Bonuses have fallen this year by around 0.5 per cent and investors should be aware that companies with weaker reserves could be forced to cut bonuses further.

Offices have to hold sufficient reserves to cover bonuses already promised on with-profits policies and one office, Norwich Union, has already been forced almost to withdraw from the market because of the strain on its reserves.

Sun Life sold £500 million of with-profits bonds last year, and so far this year has sold £150 million. However, last December, Sun Life announced that it would limit sales of with-profits bonds in 1992 to £300 million.

O&Y abandons Cabot Square Trust

OLYMPIA & York has been forced to abandon plans to launch the £215 million Cabot Square Trust, in which investors would have been granted immediate tax relief under the government's intended new provisions for the enterprise zone capital allow-

ances scheme. Sponsors of competing enterprise zone trusts are now poised to mop up business that would have gone to O&Y.

Alistair Altham, a director of Laser Richmond, said the company's phones would be manned throughout each of

the remaining weekends before the end of the tax year.

Investors can receive tax relief at their highest marginal rate on the whole of an investment in an enterprise zone trust.

Proposals to extend the scheme to include buildings

already in use for up to two years, failed to be included in the Finance Act, passed on March 13.

O&Y said that, as a result, the trust, set up in February, would no longer be eligible for the relief, so it had been called off.

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| 1984 Smaller Unit Trust Group of the Year Sunday Telegraph | 1981 Best Income Trust Money Observer |

If you would like to know more about our winning investment performance ring Andrew Brownfoot on (0491) 576868.

Past performance is not a guarantee of future performance.

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This is your last chance to invest in the SGTR Professional PEP this tax year — and claim a special discount of up to £60.

TO CLAIM

You still have time to invest between £3,000 and £6,000, and choose between tax free income or tax free growth in the UK, Europe or internationally.

UP TO £60

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PEP

But we must receive your application by 27 March 1992. For full information call 0800 289 300 now.

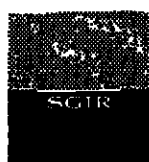
DISCOUNT.

UK tax laws may change. Past performance is not necessarily a reliable guide to the future. The price of units and shares and the income from them can go down as well as up. Investors may not get back the amount they originally invested.



0800 289 300

Lines open 9am to 8pm.



SOCIÉTÉ GÉNÉRALE TOUCHE REMNANT

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Prudential Personal Equity Plans Ltd., Valerines House, 51/59 Ilford Hill, Ilford Essex IG1 2DL.

You should of course remember, the value of shares and units and income from them may fall as well as rise and is not guaranteed and investors may not get back the amount originally invested. The level and bases of, and relief from, taxation can change. Tax reliefs are those currently available and their value depends on the individual circumstances of the investor. Freedom from tax in a PEP applies directly to the investor.

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Tel: (0245) 346 346

Please send me details of M&G Recovery Investment Trust P.L.C. and the M&G PEP.

| | | |
|-----------------|----------|---------|
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| ADDRESS | | |
| | | |
| POSTCODE | | RCKM |

We never make your name and address available to unconnected organisations. Naturally we will occasionally tell you about other products or services offered by ourselves and associated M&G Companies.

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The value of investments and the income from them can go down as well as up – you may not get back the amount you invested.

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M&G

BS99 1XU, no later than 2 days before the offer closes at 2.00p.m. on 27th March 1992.

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Where there is a will ... there is less confusion

By Liz Dolan

ONLY the power-crazed and the intensely practical enjoy making wills. For the majority, they are unwelcome reminders of mortality, to be postponed for as long as possible. They are also vital for people who have more than a toothbrush to leave to relatives, charities, pets or other favoured recipients.

A number of self-help guides are now available and last year was designated Make a Will Year. Yet, despite a wealth of publicity and information, seven out of ten adults still die intestate.

Wills and Probate, the Which? consumer guide, gives a warning that laws governing the way in which property is divided after death are strict and difficult to circumvent.

For instance, if the person who dies has not stated that his or her estate should go to the surviving spouse, sums of more than £75,000 have to be divided equally between spouse and children.

Where there are no children, parents, brothers and sisters of the deceased are entitled to half of anything above £125,000. Unmarried people, even where a couple have lived together for a number of years, are more vulnerable.

There is no legal requirement that a will should be drawn up or witnessed by a solicitor. In many cases, a lawyer is not necessary.

However, the Consumers' Association says: "The one thing worse than not making a will at all is making a mess of making a will. Many law-

yers would say that they can make more money out of poor home-made wills than they do out of drawing up wills.

Solicitors usually charge between £30 and £100 to prepare a will. Complex provisions or complicated tax planning would cost more than a simple property transfer.

Legal aid is sometimes available to single parents or the handicapped.

For less complex cases, home-made wills are adequate. WH Smith has produced an information pack costing £3.99 to help people make their own wills. Written by the district probate registrar for Winchester, it contains two forms with examples of how to fill them in. Advice on appointing executors, signing and witnessing the document is also included.

The Law Society has also published seven advice sheets. Categories include married and unmarried couples, homeowners, grandparents and divorced people. The society points out that, in the absence of a named executor, the nearest relative will be given the task of winding up the deceased's affairs.

Stepchildren are another important consideration. If not specifically mentioned in the will, they cannot inherit money unless legally adopted.

Martine Garra's *How to write a will and gain probate* has just been reissued by Kogan Page, the publisher. However, the book still refers to the £140,000 ceiling for inheritance, which was changed in the Budget.

Call for one-stop investor protection



Concerned to protect: Sir Kenneth Clucas

INVESTORS should be given more say in a simpler regulatory system for brokers and insurance company salesmen, if recommendations published by the Securities and Investments Board this week go ahead. However, investment companies could scupper the proposals.

The changes are called for in the report of Sir Kenneth Clucas, who was asked by SIB last October to look into the feasibility of a new self-regulatory organisation. His conclusion is that virtually all investment by individuals should be regulated by one body. Currently, four self-regulatory organisations deal with investment companies which sell directly to the public. SIB also directly regulates about 100 companies, and the Insurance Brokers' Registration Council is responsible for 1,600 brokers.

Godfrey Jilings, chief executive of the Financial Intermediaries, Managers and Brokers Regulatory Association, said the proposed organisation would protect investors: "It will mean speedier payouts of compensation, will avoid duplication and simplify the complaints and arbitration procedures for investors."

Investors are frequently passed from regulator to reg-

Lindsay Cook looks at proposals for a shake-up of self-regulation in the investment industry

ulator who in turn disclaim responsibility for their problems. In the case of home income plans, a one-stop complaints procedure was set up because of this willingness to pass the buck.

The *Retail Regulation Review* says that all the activities regulated by the Life Assurance and Unit Trust Regulatory Organisation (Lautro) and Fimbra should be dealt with by a new self-regulatory organisation. In addition, about 30 per cent of the investment business regulated by the Investment Management Regulatory Organisation, and a small part of the business of the Securities and Futures Authority should be controlled by the new organisation. The report also suggests that legislation should be considered to withdraw recognition from the Insurance Brokers' Registration Council, and that direct regulation of companies by the SIB should be renewed.

Sir Kenneth said that his first concern was the protection of investors and the desirability of distinguishing between professional and private investors. That should also mean an end to the cosy club atmosphere of some of the SROs.

The chairman of the new body should be from outside the industry, Sir Kenneth said, and its board should not be controlled by brokers or life companies. It should include public interest members who should, in combination with either the product providers or the independent practitioners, be able to constitute a majority. A consumer panel should also keep it in check.

The report recommends that the new body should be set up by the end of the year and should initially shadow the existing SROs, and operate fully from April next year. It will, however, need the blessing of the members of the current self-regulatory organisations. Fimbra welcomes the report — having

been bailed out twice by the life companies, it needs to know that it has funding for the compensation bills that will need to be paid next year.

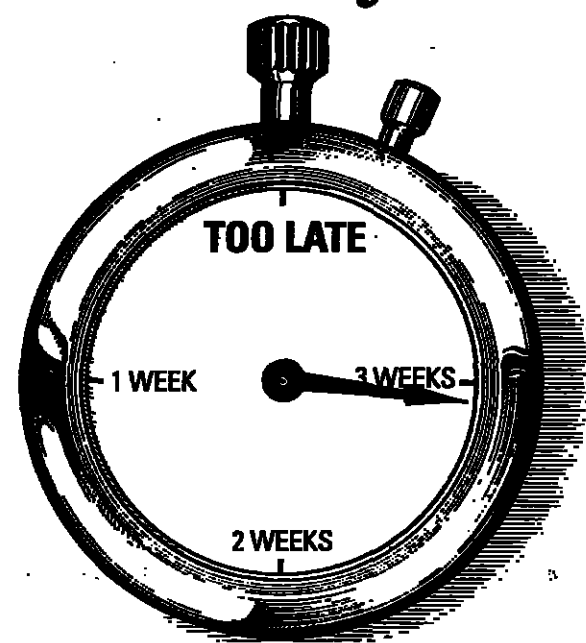
Mr Jilings said that the rush to implement the Financial Services Act before the last election meant that due consideration had not been given to all aspects of regulation. If the new body went ahead, it would prevent fraudsters and poor operators moving from one regulator to another.

Three quarters of Lautro's members would have to support its replacement by the new organisation for it to go ahead. Kit Jebens, chief executive of Lautro, said cautiously: "It seems to us, from an investor protection point of view, a good idea. It is up to the membership whether it goes ahead." John Morgan, chief executive of Imro, said: "The board of Imro would not welcome any signs that the scope of Imro should be narrowed." He added: "The people paying out the money will call the tune."

The Association of British Insurers said it would seek to ensure that care was taken to build on the features of the current regime that were working well and that the proposals did not add unnecessarily to costs.

WHY PAY TAX ON YOUR SAVINGS?

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Remember, the price of shares, and the income from them, can go down as well as up and investors may not get back the amount they originally invested, particularly in the case of early withdrawal. The levels and rules are those currently applicable and may change. The value of any tax relief depends on personal circumstances.

The financial year ends on April 5th. After that date you will lose the ability to take out a TAX-FREE Personal Equity Plan (PEP), for the 1991/92 tax year. So, beat the PEP deadline. Invest now with TaxHaven High Income from INVESCO MIM* (formerly MIM Britannia).

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*INVESCO MIM is the marketing name of the INVESCO MIM Marketing Group. INVESCO MIM Management Limited is a member of IMRO and a subsidiary of INVESCO MIM PLC.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

1. Definitions (i) "Investor" means the individual named in the Application Form as the Applicant. (ii) "Plan" means the INVESCO MIM Management Ltd. General Personal Equity Plan (PEP) taken out by the Investor and references to the Plan shall apply to all Plans established in accordance with these Terms and Conditions, separately. (iii) "Plan Manager" means INVESCO MIM Management Ltd, which has been approved by the Commissioners of the Inland Revenue to act as a plan manager and which is a member of the Investment Management Regulatory Organisation (IMRO) and as such the conduct of its investment business is regulated by IMRO. (iv) "Regulations" means the Personal Equity Plan Regulations issued by H.M. Treasury as amended from time to time. (v) "Tax Year" means the tax year from 6th April one year to 5th April in the next. (vi) "Associated Company" means any holding company of the Plan Manager or a subsidiary of any such holding company (as such terms are defined in the Companies Act 1985).

2. General (i) INVESCO MIM Management Ltd. shall act as Plan Manager for the Investor in order to provide the benefits of a Personal Equity Plan in accordance with the Regulations and subject to these Terms and Conditions. (ii) Investors may invest in only one general PEP per Tax Year, and by completing the application warrant they agree to do with their own cash. (iii) Investors will not receive unsolicited calls from the Plan Manager. (iv) Applications will be acknowledged in writing by the Plan Manager. (v) The Plan Manager reserves the right from time to time to amend the Terms and Conditions providing any amendment does not result in the Plan ceasing to qualify under the Regulations. The Plan Manager will notify the Investor in writing of any such changes at least 14 days prior to any changes taking effect. (vi) The Plan Manager is an authorised person under the Financial Services Act 1986. Details of compensation rights can be obtained from the Plan Manager's Compliance Officer or direct from the Securities and Investments Board. Any complaints should be referred, in writing, to the Head of Investor Services, INVESCO MIM Management Ltd, for investigation. Investors also have the right to complain directly to IMRO or to the Investment Referee.

3. Investment (i) Investment in the Plan may be made with cash or cheques only. (ii) The Plan Manager will, where relevant, be entitled, without prior disclosure or reference to the Investor, to effect or arrange investments in which it, or an Associated Company may be interested including where the Plan Manager or an Associated Company has underwritten, managed, or arranged an issue or offer for sale during the previous twelve months. (iii) Distributions of income received within the Plan together with the appropriate tax credits and any interest arising from cash balances will be retained within the Plan unless otherwise agreed with the Investor. (iv) Actual yields could vary from estimates due to changes in the amounts and timing of company dividends. Any initial yield should be regarded as an indication only. Income distributions on income paying PEPs will normally be made twice yearly on dates to be notified by the Plan Manager. Payment is expected to be within one month of the relevant distribution dates and may be subject to a minimum level of income available for distribution. The minimum figure is £10 (subject to change). (v) All investments held under the Plan will be held in the name of a designated nominee who will normally be an Associated Company. The Plan Manager will only accept liability for the negligence or default of third parties where they are Associated Companies. (vi) The Investor will be the beneficial owner of all investments held within the Plan. Documents evidencing title will be held by, or on behalf of, the Plan Manager. (vii) The Plan Manager shall not be responsible for losses unless due to its negligence or willful default.

4. Management (i) Pending investment or reinvestment, cash will be held in a Client Bank Account with the Royal Bank of Scotland Plc for such other bank as the Plan Manager may from time to time nominate. Any cash held in the Plan will attract interest. (ii) Investors will be given an asset valuation and a statement of transactions as at the 5th April and 5th October or at such other dates as may be determined by the Plan Manager, in each case within twenty-five business days from the reporting date. Reports are not expected to include a measure of performance but, annually will contain a statement of the reasons for the purchases, sales and holding of investments. (iii) The Plan Manager will, if requested in writing, supply to the Investor copies of entries in its books relating to the Investor and may make a charge for this service. (iv) Investments will not be lent by the Plan Manager to a third party. The Plan Manager will not commit the Investor to any underwriting or borrowing on his behalf. (v) The Investor hereby warrants that he/she is and will remain the sole, beneficial owner of the assets held under the Plan. (vi) If the tax-free element of the scheme is withdrawn, the Plan will continue to be managed by the Plan Manager. New Terms and Conditions will be sent to investors. (vii) Management fees may be supplemented but will not be abated by any other remuneration receivable by the Plan Manager in connection with transactions effected by the Plan Manager with or for the Investor under this or any other agreement. (viii) The Plan Manager may provide the Inland Revenue with all relevant particulars and certificates as may be required under the Regulations and may conduct appeals or agree on behalf of the Investor all liabilities to, and reliefs from, tax in respect of the Plan. (ix) The Plan Manager will have authority to manage the Plan in its absolute discretion, subject to the Regulations. It is the normal policy of the Plan Manager to keep the Plan fully invested in shares listed on the International Stock Exchange, although investments may also be made in UK authorised unit trusts. (x) Associated Companies may act as principal in dealings with the Investor and may select brokers (including Associated Companies) to deal in securities in such transactions. Such Associated Companies may retain all remuneration derived from such transactions and shall not be liable to account to the Investor for the same. (xi) The Plan Manager may transact business on behalf of the Investor, with a person or persons who provide statistical research and other services to either the Plan Manager or any Associated Company, without payment to them of a fee. Any transaction with or through the agency of any such person will be effected for best execution, disregarding any benefits which might arise directly or indirectly to the Investor from these services or benefits under such an agreement. (xii) On request, and for an extra annual fee of £20 (+VAT), the Investor can receive company reports. (xiii) For an additional £20 (+VAT), per annum the Investor can attend shareholders' meetings and exercise his voting rights. (xiv) The Plan Manager will make an initial charge and an annual charge payable quarterly in arrears. The current initial charge is 5% and the current annual charge is 1.5%. These fees may be varied by the Plan Manager on three months' notice. The Plan Manager will not levy charges for dealings within the Plan although brokerage or equivalent costs will be charged. VAT and stamp duty will be charged in addition if applicable.

5. Instructions, Termination of Plans and Withdrawal of Cash (i) The Investor by giving written notification to the Plan Manager may at any time: (a) terminate the Plan; (b) withdraw in whole or part the market value of the assets at the current bid price, less brokerage, or equivalent costs, held under the Plan; or (c) transfer assets held under the Plan in such cases subject to any restrictions or deductions which the Plan Manager may be entitled or bound to make hereunder or under the Regulations. The Plan Manager will transfer the Plan to another plan manager if requested to do so in writing by the Investor. One month's notice will be required. At the discretion of the Plan Manager, the Plan may be kept open with a nominal sum in order to ensure that outstanding tax credits may be claimed from the Inland Revenue for the Investor's benefit. (ii) The Plan Manager has absolute discretion in determining which shares/units are to be sold for partial withdrawals. (iii) The Plan Manager will not release assets until an original written authority has been received from the Investor. Photocopies and faxes are not normally acceptable. The Plan Manager will not normally accept instructions by telephone. (iv) Instructions received after 1 pm will not be actioned until the following business day. (v) Instructions to terminate the Plan after 1 pm on the penultimate business day of the Stock Exchange's account period will not be actioned until the first business day of the new account. Instructions to investors will normally take place on the appropriate settlement day for the new account. (vi) Equity investments will be sold at the closing bid price, quoted by TELEKURS, for the day of dealing. (vii) Unit trust investments will be sold at the ruling bid price quoted at the next valuation point for the trust, normally 10am the following business day. (viii) Termination of the Plan shall be without prejudice to the completion of transactions within the Plan which have already been initiated. A redemption may be made by the Plan Manager to cover such facilities. (ix) On death the Plan will cease. All investments held under the Plan will be retained (although without the tax benefits of the Plan) pending instructions from the personal representatives of the deceased. (x) The Investor must immediately notify the Plan Manager if he ceases to qualify under the Regulations when the Plan will, if appropriate, be terminated. The Plan Manager will notify the Investor and the Inland Revenue if it becomes aware that the Plan has or will become void by reason of any failure to comply with the Regulations. (xi) The Plan Manager may terminate the Plan at any time withdrawals reduce the value of any plan below £1,000. (xii) The Plan Manager will give written notification to the Investor of any intention to cease to act as Plan Manager in order that the Investor can request that his Plan be transferred to another plan manager. (xiii) The Plan Manager reserves the right to pass on any expenses or costs incurred when transferring Plans between plan managers. (xiv) Any instructions from the Investor to the Plan Manager are to be in writing addressed to PEP Administration, INVESCO MIM Management Ltd, 11 Devonshire Square, London EC2M 4YR. All instructions will be acknowledged. Instructions not in accordance with these Terms and Conditions may be refused. The Plan Manager shall be entitled to rely on all instructions purporting to come from the Investor. (xv) Cooling-Off Rights. An individual will not have a right to withdraw his/her application within seven days of receipt by the Plan Manager the "Cooling-Off Period" unless he/she invests on the personal recommendation of an independent financial adviser.

1991/92 TAXHAVEN APPLICATION FORM

Please complete in BLOCK CAPITALS and send to: INVESCO MIM, FREEPOST, 11 Devonshire Square, London EC2M 2YT.

OFFICE USE ONLY

A00410

100 110

100 119

1. INVESTMENT DETAILS

(Only one plan may be selected) Please indicate your choice by ticking the relevant box. The minimum investment is £2,000 and the maximum is £6,000, which includes the Manager's set up charge of 5% plus VAT.

Please make your cheque payable to INVESCO MIM Management Limited.

TaxHaven High Income (reinvested income) ☐

or TaxHaven High Income (distributed income) ☐

I would like to invest (including charges) £

2. PERSONAL DETAILS

Title (Mr/Ms/Ms/Ms/Ms)

Forenames

Surname

Permanent UK Address

In 'care of' address (cannot be accepted)

Postcode

Telephone Number

National Insurance Number

or Pension Number

Tax District and reference (if known)

*Inland Revenue PEP regulations mean that we cannot accept this application without your National Insurance or Pension number. Your National Insurance number can be found on your payslip, your tax return, your tax code notice or from your employer's personnel department.

3. PLEASE MAKE SURE you have enclosed your cheque made payable to INVESCO MIM Management Ltd, indicated the amount you wish to invest and completed all personal details including National Insurance/Pension Number.

NOW PLEASE READ AND SIGN THE FOLLOWING DECLARATION

I apply for a TAXHAVEN Personal Equity Plan for the current tax year. I confirm that I have read and understood and agree to be bound by the Terms and Conditions. I declare that I am aged 18 or over, and I am resident and ordinarily resident in the United Kingdom ("UK") for tax purposes or non-resident but performing duties which by virtue of section 132 (4) (a) of the Income and Corporation Taxes Act 1988 are treated as being performed in the UK, and that I HAVE MADE NO OTHER APPLICATION TO SUBSCRIBE TO ANOTHER GENERAL PERSONAL EQUITY PLAN FOR THE TAX YEAR TO WHICH THIS APPLICATION RELATES. I authorise INVESCO MIM Management Ltd. to hold my cash subscription, Plan investments, interest, distributions and any other rights or proceeds in respect of these investments and any other cash and to make on my behalf any claims for relief from tax in respect of my Plan investments to the Inland Revenue. I authorise INVESCO MIM Management Ltd., as Plan Manager on my written request to transfer or pay to me, as the case may be, Plan investments, interest, distributions, rights or other proceeds in respect of such investments or any cash. I declare that the information given in this application is true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief and that I will inform INVESCO MIM Management Ltd. without delay of any change in my circumstances affecting any of the information given on the form.

Signature Date

If you require an additional Application Form for your partner, please tick box. ☐

THE New Europe Fund, a European unit trust, is being launched by Mercury Asset Management. The fund aims to achieve capital growth rather than income and will target individual stocks. It will invest particularly in smaller companies, recovery

stocks and companies benefiting from regional and industrial changes and those with exposure to eastern Europe. The minimum investment is £1,000 or £50 a month through the Mercury savings plan. A discount of 1 per cent is available during the offer period until April 3.

□ National & Provincial building society is extending its offer of an extra 1 per cent gross interest to holders of Instant Reserve accounts for a further month. Existing customers who add new money will receive an extra 1 per cent gross interest. The additional savings must be left in the account until April 30 and the account must stay open until March 1, 1993.

□ Offshore savers with the Cheltenham & Gloucester building society will now earn gross interest of 11.35 per cent on balances of £250,000 or more in C&G Guernsey gold, the society's instant access offshore account.

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The Equitable Life

Before you look to your future, look to our past.

Pensions in the melting pot

BY SARA MCCONNELL

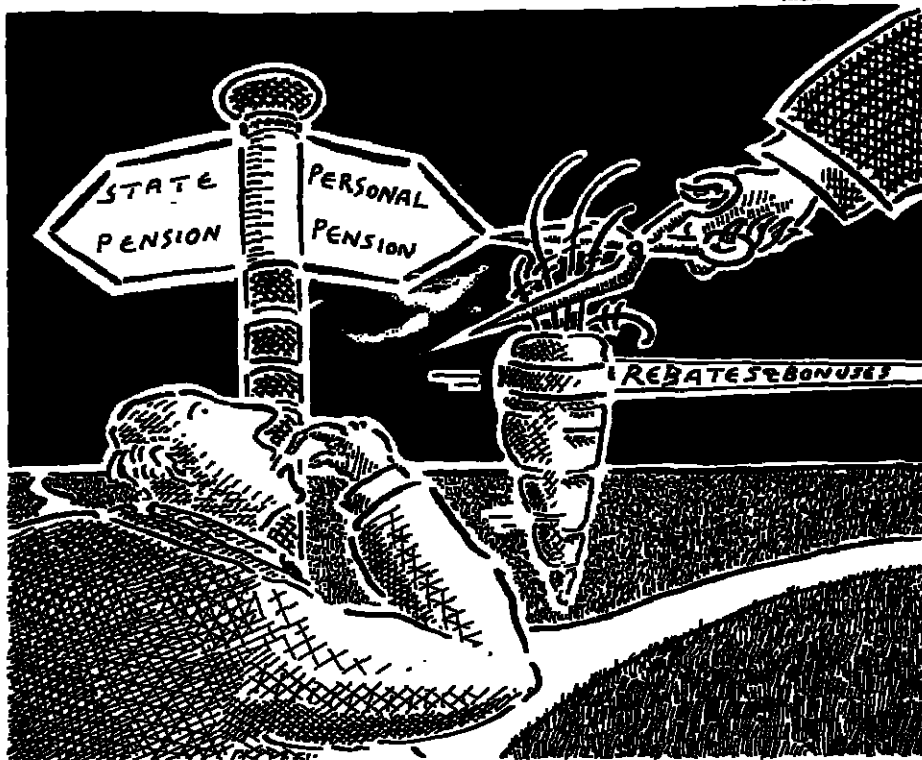
LABOUR'S announcement in its shadow Budget this week that it will immediately withdraw the 2 per cent incentive for opting out of the state pension scheme will cut by between five and seven years the age at which employees should opt back into the state scheme.

Mercer Fraser, the actuary, calculates that men aged between 46 and 47 and women aged 39 should opt back into the state scheme if the only incentive to contract out is the 4.8 per cent rebate set last month by the government actuary to be paid from April 1993.

If the Conservatives are returned to power, those over 30 opting out of the state scheme after April 1993 would receive the 1 per cent incentive announced last month. This would cut by half the 2 per cent rebate offered in the last five years to everyone contracting out.

Under Conservative plans, men would benefit from staying out of the state scheme until they were 51, while women should not opt back in until they are 43, Mercer Fraser said.

Labour said yesterday that legislating to remove the 2 per cent incentive would be a



high priority if it had a majority at the next general election. The removal would not be backdated but would take place in the 1992-3 tax year.

Legal & General calculates that a Labour win would mean men contracting back into the state scheme when they are 40 instead of 45 and

women opting back when they are 35 instead of 40. Age levels vary, but the five to seven-year interval remains fairly constant.

Noble Lowndes, the actuary, said that although everyone's calculations differed, the ages of 40 to 50 were "critical for deciding whether to opt

back into the state scheme". Conservative initiatives to encourage people to opt out of the state scheme have cost the national insurance fund £9 billion in rebates between 1988 and 1993, the National Audit Office has said. This will only be partly offset by a £3 billion saving in Serps

provision in the future. The contracting out rebate for the first five years of the scheme was set at 5.8 per cent, with an extra 2 per cent bonus for the first five years.

At the moment, rebates for opting out are based on weekly earnings between £54 and £405. The £405 a week ceiling for Serps rebates would remain under a Labour administration although one of the central planks of Labour's economic strategy is to remove the ceiling on national insurance contributions.

Personal pensions set up to receive contracted-out Serps rebates are likely to be less attractive, whoever gets into power. Colin Evans, senior consultant at Mercer Fraser, said: "The only reason that most of these pensions were set up in the first place was because of the 2 per cent incentive. It is doubtful whether young people will find it attractive enough to contract out if they only have the 4.8 per cent rebate to put in."

He added that the expense of setting up personal pensions would offset any advantage gained by investing the rebate. Even the 1 per cent incentive planned by the Conservatives would make them less tempting than they had been, said Mr Evans.



Sun block: Anglers can buy policies that compensate them for dry weather

Casting for cover

Anne Caborn reels in a few pointers to the insurance needs of recreational fishermen

FISHERMEN'S tales of lost and damaged property can stretch the belief of insurance companies. Angela Houghton, managing director of Leisure Angling, a Liverpool holiday firm, says it is surprising how many fishermen who fall into the water seem to be clutching an expensive camera or radio. "Or a cow has stepped on their carbon fibre rod".

Like the big one that got

away, stories of lost property and waterlogged thigh-length waders get a sympathetic ear and a word of advice. "I tell them they should have their valuables covered under their home contents policy." Travel policies do not provide sufficient cover for rods, which can cost more than £500.

Leisure Angling does offer a travel insurance policy, but there is a £200 limit on loss or damage to valuables. This is common to many policies. It also has a £25 excess, and the exclusions include "waterborne craft and all their equipment, fittings, tools and accessories".

Bob Brownless, owner of Bobsport in Edinburgh, said valuables being lost in the water was not the most common problem. "What you've got to watch out for is theft. It's more of a problem near the cities, and these days we use ski boxes clamped to the roof of the car. We also tell fishermen to take equipment into their hotels with them at night."

According to the claims department of Norwich Union, valuables lost when people fall in the water while mooring is another source of claims. "There are also characters who row up and down rivers snatching rods from boats and river banks while their owners are in the pub," said a spokesman.

Insurers take a dim view of losses resulting from items being left unattended. Apart from the low value limit on typical travel insurance, the all-risks section of a home contents policy will generally provide better protection.

"If the item stolen from a locked car was covered under the all-risks section of your home contents policy, most insurers would cover it, provided you have taken reasonable care," said a spokeswoman for the Association of British Insurers.

"The more you can do the better, even if it's just covering the item with a blanket. If you can lock it in the boot, so much the better."

Fishing holidays do not require a special type of travel insurance policy, although it is always worth confirming

this with a household insurer. Both Bardays and Norwich Union, major providers of free-standing travel insurance, said they would cover a fishing trip under their standard policies.

But for some aficionados of piscatorial pursuits, simple travel insurance may not be enough. Eagle Star, which has been offering pluvius, or adverse weather, insurance since 1920, offers one policy that only a fisherman — or a fish — could want.

Its Piscatorial Pluvius Policy was designed specifically for fishermen in Scotland who wanted to insure against a shortage of rainfall, which in turn could lead to low river levels and an absence of salmon or trout.

Eagle Star offers the policy for June, July, August and September, and issues between 40 and 50 a year. Costs vary according to time and place. The insurance is available in multiples of £200 sum insured up to a maximum of £1,000 per fortnight. Anglers need to give 21 days' notice.

Premiums range from £22.50 up to £30 for every £200 sum insured. Two weeks on the Spey in June will cost £30 for every £200. Any payout will also be related to how little rain fell, ranging from a £20 payout for a fortnight's aggregate rainfall of 8mm (0.31in), to the full £200 for 4mm (0.16in) or less. The rainfall is verified by the nearest rain station.

NEED ADVICE ON A PERSONAL EQUITY PLAN?

Ring our free Moneyline from 9.00 a.m. - 9.00 p.m., 7 days a week, on

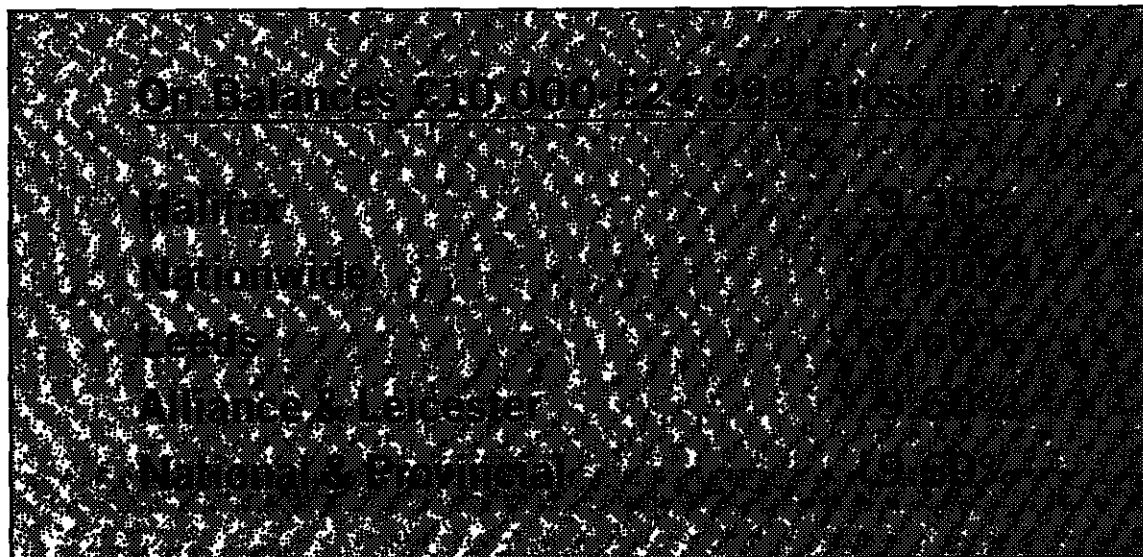
0800 282 101

SAVE & PROSPER

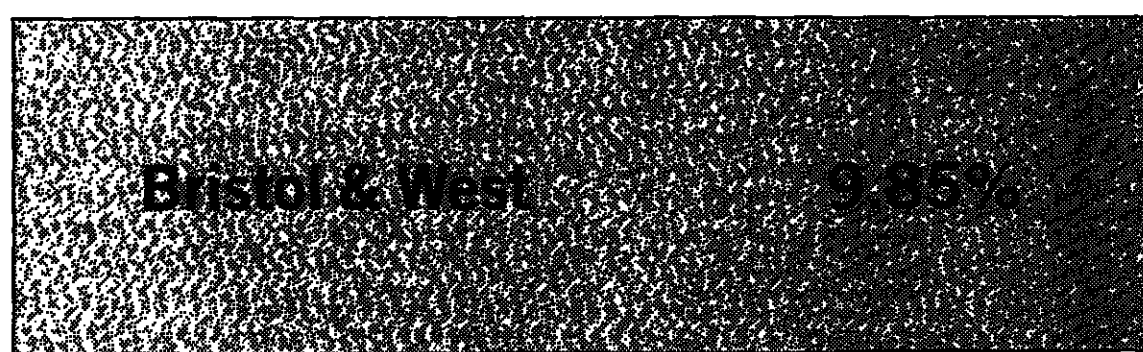
THE INVESTMENT HOUSE

Member of IFA and LIA

You could wait 90 days to get these rates.



Or just 30 days for ours.



At the Bristol & West we like to give you more for your money. That's why our HIGH 30 high interest savings account pays you a better rate than any other top 10 building society on investments of between £10,000 and £24,999, as well as very competitive rates on all balances. And whereas with other societies you might have to wait 90 days

HIGH 30



BRISTOL & WEST BUILDING SOCIETY

to earn high interest, HIGH 30 only needs 30 days notice. We'll also give you one emergency withdrawal of up to £1,000 every year without any notice. To open a HIGH 30 account, or to find out more, just pop into your local Bristol & West branch or call us free

on 0800 100 117 anytime. And make your money work that little bit harder.

BRISTOL & WEST BUILDING SOCIETY, P.O. BOX 32, BROAD QUAY, BRISTOL BS99 7AL. INTEREST RATES ARE VARIABLE. GROSS RATES DO NOT TAKE ACCOUNT OF DEDUCTIONS OF BASIC RATE INCOME TAX OR COMPOUNDING WHERE INTEREST IS PAID MORE THAN ONCE A YEAR. SOME INVESTORS MAY BE ELIGIBLE TO RECLAIM TAX DEDUCTED OR HAVE INTEREST PAID WITHOUT THE DEDUCTION OF TAX. WHILE THE COMPETITION ACCOUNTS DETAILED MAY HAVE INSTANT ACCESS TO SOME OF YOUR CAPITAL, IT IS ONLY HIGH 30 THAT OFFERS ACCESS TO ALL OF YOUR CAPITAL WITH 30 DAYS NOTICE. CURRENT ANNUAL RATES FROM HIGH 30 ARE £500-£4,999 8.5%, £5,000-£9,999 9.25%, £10,000-£24,999 9.5%, £25,000-£49,999 9.75%, £50,000-£99,999 10.30%, £100,000+ 10.35%. INTEREST IS PAYABLE ON HIGH 30 AS AT 1ST APRIL EACH YEAR. RATES CORRECT AT TIME OF GOING TO PRESS.

THE ALLIANCE Trust Companies of Dundee

Put not your trust in riches, but put your riches in Trust
(John Gifford, Chairman, Alliance Trust AGM, Dundee 1991)

THE ALLIANCE TRUST PLC FINAL RESULTS for the year ended 31st January 1992

INCOME: Earnings up 7.0% Dividend raised by 7.9%

ASSETS: Total assets £779.9m, net asset value up by 24.2% (1991 All-Share Index up 14.5%)

DISTRIBUTION: Equities UK 50.9%, N. America 20.2%, Europe 4.9%, Far East 7.1% Cash 3.3%

EXPENSES: 0.17% of assets. No soft commissions paid or expenses charged to capital

To: The Secretary, Meadow House, 64 Belford Street, Dundee DD1 1TJ

Please send me:

ALLIANCE TRUST REPORT AND ACCOUNTS ☐

ALLIANCE PEP: A self select PEP with a choice of over 100 shares. No initial or annual charges and very low dealing costs. Includes Single Company Plan ☐

SAVINGS SCHEME: Low cost method of investing lump sums or regular savings in the Alliance Trust. Both the PEP and the Savings Scheme include a Share Exchange Facility ☐

TESSA: Fixed and variable interest rates directly linked to money market rates. ☐

Name: _____

Address: _____

Postcode: _____

This advertisement has been approved by Alliance Trust Savings Limited, a member of FIAA. Such is the Alliance Trust PLC's intention as a long term investment and because it may be subject to change as well as up variations may not get back the full amount invested.

Shares remain nervous

ACCOUNT DAYS: Dealings began March 9. Dealings ended yesterday. Settlement day March 30. Forward bargains are permitted on two previous business days. Prices recorded are at market close. Changes are calculated on the previous day's close, but adjustments are made when a stock is ex-dividend. Changes, yields and price/earnings ratios are based on middle prices.

Portfolio

PLATINUM
From your Portfolio Platinum check your eight share price movements on the right. Add these prices to your running total for the week and check the weekly dividend figure on the right. If it is a share of the total weekly price money earned, if you wish, follow the claim procedure on the back of your card. You must always have your card available when claiming. Claims rules appear on the back of your card.

| No. | Company | Group | Share Price |
|-----|-----------------|--------------|-------------|
| 1 | Nitin Foods | Food | 1.10 |
| 2 | Perry Coy | Motor/Air | 1.10 |
| 3 | BAA | Transport | 1.10 |
| 4 | Hillwood | Food | 1.10 |
| 5 | Shedfield | Building/Rtr | 1.10 |
| 6 | Spinning Rm | Industrial | 1.10 |
| 7 | Twinkl Wood | Building/Rtr | 1.10 |
| 8 | Smurfit (P) | Paper/Print | 1.10 |
| 9 | OKN | Industrial | 1.10 |
| 10 | Barron Dow | Building/Rtr | 1.10 |
| 11 | SEF Int | Industrial | 1.10 |
| 12 | New London | Oil/Gas | 1.10 |
| 13 | Laird (D) | Building/Rtr | 1.10 |
| 14 | Swire Pacific A | Industrial | 1.10 |
| 15 | Barclays Int | Food | 1.10 |
| 16 | BPI Int | Building/Rtr | 1.10 |
| 17 | Comrade | Industrial | 1.10 |
| 18 | Wessex G | Building/Rtr | 1.10 |
| 19 | Blue Circle | Building/Rtr | 1.10 |
| 20 | Ryl Bk Scot | Bank/Disc | 1.10 |
| 21 | Hornby | Industrial | 1.10 |
| 22 | Wessex Water | Water | 1.10 |
| 23 | Carls | Bank/Disc | 1.10 |
| 24 | ERF | Motor/Air | 1.10 |
| 25 | Avon Rubber | Industrial | 1.10 |
| 26 | Matthew Clark | Food | 1.10 |
| 27 | ROC | Industrial | 1.10 |
| 28 | French (Thames) | Industrial | 1.10 |
| 29 | Don & New | Food | 1.10 |
| 30 | Blackley Air | Motor/Air | 1.10 |
| 31 | Agnes Court | Paper/Print | 1.10 |
| 32 | Shedfield Int | Industrial | 1.10 |
| 33 | Slime Duty | Industrial | 1.10 |
| 34 | ACT Group | Industrial | 1.10 |
| 35 | BPP | Noncomp/Pub | 1.10 |
| 36 | Admiral | Electronic | 1.10 |
| 37 | Steeley | Building/Rtr | 1.10 |
| 38 | Lloyds | Bank/Disc | 1.10 |
| 39 | Flax Tech | Electronic | 1.10 |
| 40 | Alphacore | Electronic | 1.10 |
| 41 | Baroness Ltd | Transport | 1.10 |
| 42 | Micro Focus | Electronic | 1.10 |
| 43 | Williams Hldg | Industrial | 1.10 |

Please take into account any minor signs.
Weekly Dividend
Please make a note of your daily dividend for the weekly dividend of £4.00 in today's newspaper.

| MON | TUE | WED | THU | FRI | SAT | SUN |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| | | | | | | |

Three readers shared the Portfolio Platinum prize yesterday. Edward Williams, of Exeter; Donald Honeb, of Weymouth; and James Scornell, of Hull, received £66.66 each.

BANKS, DISCOUNT, HP

| 1991/92 | High | Low | Company | Price | Net Yld | % P/E |
|---------|------|-----|---------------------|-------|---------|-------|
| 1991/92 | 114 | 114 | Barclays | 114 | 2.1 | 10.5 |
| 1991/92 | 114 | 114 | HSBC | 114 | 2.1 | 10.5 |
| 1991/92 | 114 | 114 | London & Lancashire | 114 | 2.1 | 10.5 |
| 1991/92 | 114 | 114 | Midland | 114 | 2.1 | 10.5 |
| 1991/92 | 114 | 114 | Norfolk & Norwich | 114 | 2.1 | 10.5 |
| 1991/92 | 114 | 114 | Paragon | 114 | 2.1 | 10.5 |
| 1991/92 | 114 | 114 | Prudential | 114 | 2.1 | 10.5 |
| 1991/92 | 114 | 114 | Shropshire | 114 | 2.1 | 10.5 |
| 1991/92 | 114 | 114 | South Wales | 114 | 2.1 | 10.5 |
| 1991/92 | 114 | 114 | Staffordshire | 114 | 2.1 | 10.5 |
| 1991/92 | 114 | 114 | West Yorkshire | 114 | 2.1 | 10.5 |
| 1991/92 | 114 | 114 | Yorkshire | 114 | 2.1 | 10.5 |

BREWERS

| 1991/92 | High | Low | Company | Price | Net Yld | % P/E |
|---------|------|-----|----------------|-------|---------|-------|
| 1991/92 | 114 | 114 | Adnams | 114 | 2.1 | 10.5 |
| 1991/92 | 114 | 114 | Beck's | 114 | 2.1 | 10.5 |
| 1991/92 | 114 | 114 | Carlsberg | 114 | 2.1 | 10.5 |
| 1991/92 | 114 | 114 | Guinness | 114 | 2.1 | 10.5 |
| 1991/92 | 114 | 114 | Heineken | 114 | 2.1 | 10.5 |
| 1991/92 | 114 | 114 | Kaiser Brewery | 114 | 2.1 | 10.5 |
| 1991/92 | 114 | 114 | Miller | 114 | 2.1 | 10.5 |
| 1991/92 | 114 | 114 | Samuel Adams | 114 | 2.1 | 10.5 |
| 1991/92 | 114 | 114 | Stout | 114 | 2.1 | 10.5 |
| 1991/92 | 114 | 114 | Tottenham | 114 | 2.1 | 10.5 |

BUILDING, ROADS

| 1991/92 | High | Low | Company | Price | Net Yld | % P/E |
|---------|------|-----|----------------|-------|---------|-------|
| 1991/92 | 114 | 114 | Amey | 114 | 2.1 | 10.5 |
| 1991/92 | 114 | 114 | Balfour Beatty | 114 | 2.1 | 10.5 |
| 1991/92 | 114 | 114 | Bechtel | 114 | 2.1 | 10.5 |
| 1991/92 | 114 | 114 | Chambers | 114 | 2.1 | 10.5 |
| 1991/92 | 114 | 114 | Costain | 114 | 2.1 | 10.5 |
| 1991/92 | 114 | 114 | Heathrow | 114 | 2.1 | 10.5 |
| 1991/92 | 114 | 114 | John Laing | 114 | 2.1 | 10.5 |
| 1991/92 | 114 | 114 | McAlpine | 114 | 2.1 | 10.5 |
| 1991/92 | 114 | 114 | Parsons | 114 | 2.1 | 10.5 |
| 1991/92 | 114 | 114 | Skanska | 114 | 2.1 | 10.5 |

CHEMICALS, PLASTICS

| 1991/92 | High | Low | Company | Price | Net Yld | % P/E |
|---------|------|-----|-----------|-------|---------|-------|
| 1991/92 | 114 | 114 | Acetylene | 114 | 2.1 | 10.5 |
| 1991/92 | 114 | 114 | Acetylene | 114 | 2.1 | 10.5 |
| 1991/92 | 114 | 114 | Acetylene | 114 | 2.1 | 10.5 |
| 1991/92 | 114 | 114 | Acetylene | 114 | 2.1 | 10.5 |
| 1991/92 | 114 | 114 | Acetylene | 114 | 2.1 | 10.5 |
| 1991/92 | 114 | 114 | Acetylene | 114 | 2.1 | 10.5 |
| 1991/92 | 114 | 114 | Acetylene | 114 | 2.1 | 10.5 |
| 1991/92 | 114 | 114 | Acetylene | 114 | 2.1 | 10.5 |
| 1991/92 | 114 | 114 | Acetylene | 114 | 2.1 | 10.5 |
| 1991/92 | 114 | 114 | Acetylene | 114 | 2.1 | 10.5 |

ELECTRICITY

| 1991/92 | High | Low | Company | Price | Net Yld | % P/E |
|---------|------|-----|-------------|-------|---------|-------|
| 1991/92 | 114 | 114 | Electricity | 114 | 2.1 | 10.5 |
| 1991/92 | 114 | 114 | Electricity | 114 | 2.1 | 10.5 |
| 1991/92 | 114 | 114 | Electricity | 114 | 2.1 | 10.5 |
| 1991/92 | 114 | 114 | Electricity | 114 | 2.1 | 10.5 |
| 1991/92 | 114 | 114 | Electricity | 114 | 2.1 | 10.5 |
| 1991/92 | 114 | 114 | Electricity | 114 | 2.1 | 10.5 |
| 1991/92 | 114 | 114 | Electricity | 114 | 2.1 | 10.5 |
| 1991/92 | 114 | 114 | Electricity | 114 | 2.1 | 10.5 |
| 1991/92 | 114 | 114 | Electricity | 114 | 2.1 | 10.5 |
| 1991/92 | 114 | 114 | Electricity | 114 | 2.1 | 10.5 |

FINANCE, LAND

| 1991/92 | High | Low | Company | Price | Net Yld | % P/E |
|---------|------|-----|---------|-------|---------|-------|
| 1991/92 | 114 | 114 | Finance | 114 | 2.1 | 10.5 |
| 1991/92 | 114 | 114 | Finance | 114 | 2.1 | 10.5 |
| 1991/92 | 114 | 114 | Finance | 114 | 2.1 | 10.5 |
| 1991/92 | 114 | 114 | Finance | 114 | 2.1 | 10.5 |
| 1991/92 | 114 | 114 | Finance | 114 | 2.1 | 10.5 |
| 1991/92 | 114 | 114 | Finance | 114 | 2.1 | 10.5 |
| 1991/92 | 114 | 114 | Finance | 114 | 2.1 | 10.5 |
| 1991/92 | 114 | 114 | Finance | 114 | 2.1 | 10.5 |
| 1991/92 | 114 | 114 | Finance | 114 | 2.1 | 10.5 |
| 1991/92 | 114 | 114 | Finance | 114 | 2.1 | 10.5 |

FINANCIAL TRUSTS

| 1991/92 | High | Low | Company | Price | Net Yld | % P/E |
|---------|------|-----|-----------|-------|---------|-------|
| 1991/92 | 114 | 114 | Financial | 114 | 2.1 | 10.5 |
| 1991/92 | 114 | 114 | Financial | 114 | 2.1 | 10.5 |
| 1991/92 | 114 | 114 | Financial | 114 | 2.1 | 10.5 |
| 1991/92 | 114 | 114 | Financial | 114 | 2.1 | 10.5 |
| 1991/92 | 114 | 114 | Financial | 114 | 2.1 | 10.5 |
| 1991/92 | 114 | 114 | Financial | 114 | 2.1 | 10.5 |
| 1991/92 | 114 | 114 | Financial | 114 | 2.1 | 10.5 |
| 1991/92 | 114 | 114 | Financial | 114 | 2.1 | 10.5 |
| 1991/92 | 114 | 114 | Financial | 114 | 2.1 | 10.5 |
| 1991/92 | 114 | 114 | Financial | 114 | 2.1 | 10.5 |

FOODS

| 1991/92 | High | Low | Company | Price | Net Yld | % P/E |
|---------|------|-----|---------|-------|---------|-------|
| 1991/92 | 114 | 114 | Food | 114 | 2.1 | 10.5 |
| 1991/92 | 114 | 114 | Food | 114 | 2.1 | 10.5 |
| 1991/92 | 114 | 114 | Food | 114 | 2.1 | 10.5 |
| 1991/92 | 114 | 114 | Food | 114 | 2.1 | 10.5 |
| 1991/92 | 114 | 114 | Food | 114 | 2.1 | 10.5 |
| 1991/92 | 114 | 114 | Food | 114 | 2.1 | 10.5 |
| 1991/92 | 114 | 114 | Food | 114 | 2.1 | 10.5 |
| 1991/92 | 114 | 114 | Food | 114 | 2.1 | 10.5 |
| 1991/92 | 114 | 114 | Food | 114 | 2.1 | 10.5 |
| 1991/92 | 114 | 114 | Food | 114 | 2.1 | 10.5 |

ELECTRICALS

| 1991/92 | High | Low | Company | Price | Net Yld | % P/E |
|---------|------|-----|------------|-------|---------|-------|
| 1991/92 | 114 | 114 | Electrical | 114 | 2.1 | 10.5 |
| 1991/92 | 114 | 114 | Electrical | 114 | 2.1 | 10.5 |
| 1991/92 | 114 | 114 | Electrical | 114 | 2.1 | 10.5 |
| 1991/92 | 114 | 114 | Electrical | 114 | 2.1 | 10.5 |
| 1991/92 | 114 | 114 | Electrical | 114 | 2.1 | 10.5 |
| 1991/92 | 114 | 114 | Electrical | 114 | 2.1 | 10.5 |
| 1991/92 | 114 | 114 | Electrical | 114 | 2.1 | 10.5 |
| 1991/92 | 114 | 114 | Electrical | 114 | 2.1 | 10.5 |
| 1991/92 | 114 | 114 | Electrical | 114 | 2.1 | 10.5 |
| 1991/92 | 114 | 114 | Electrical | 114 | 2.1 | 10.5 |

HOTELS, CATERERS

| 1991/92 | High | Low | Company | Price | Net Yld | % P/E |
|---------|------|-----|---------|-------|---------|-------|
| 1991/92 | 114 | 114 | Hotels | 114 | 2.1 | 10.5 |
| 1991/92 | 114 | 114 | Hotels | 114 | 2.1 | 10.5 |
| 1991/92 | 114 | 114 | Hotels | 114 | 2.1 | 10.5 |
| 1991/92 | 114 | 114 | Hotels | 114 | 2.1 | 10.5 |
| 1991/92 | 114 | 114 | Hotels | 114 | 2.1 | 10.5 |
| 1991/92 | 114 | 114 | Hotels | 114 | 2.1 | 10.5 |
| 1991/92 | 114 | 114 | Hotels | 114 | 2.1 | 10.5 |
| 1991/92 | 114 | 114 | Hotels | 114 | 2.1 | 10.5 |
| 1991/92 | 114 | 114 | Hotels | 114 | 2.1 | 10.5 |
| 1991/92 | 114 | 114 | Hotels | 114 | 2.1 | 10.5 |

INDUSTRIALS

| 1991/92 | High | Low | Company | Price | Net Yld | % P/E |
|---------|------|-----|------------|-------|---------|-------|
| 1991/92 | 114 | 114 | Industrial | 114 | 2.1 | 10.5 |
| 1991/92 | 114 | 114 | Industrial | 114 | 2.1 | 10.5 |
| 1991/92 | 114 | 114 | Industrial | 114 | 2.1 | 10.5 |
| 1991/92 | 114 | 114 | Industrial | 114 | 2.1 | 10.5 |
| 1991/92 | 114 | 114 | Industrial | 114 | 2.1 | 10.5 |
| 1991/92 | 114 | 114 | Industrial | 114 | 2.1 | 10.5 |
| 1991/92 | 114 | 114 | Industrial | 114 | 2.1 | 10.5 |
| 1991/92 | 114 | 114 | Industrial | 114 | 2.1 | 10.5 |
| 1991/92 | 114 | 114 | Industrial | 114 | 2.1 | 10.5 |
| 1991/92 | 114 | 114 | Industrial | 114 | 2.1 | 10.5 |

BRITISH FUNDS

| 1991/92 | High | Low | Company | Price | Net Yld | % P/E |
|---------|------|-----|---------|-------|---------|-------|
| 1991/92 | 114 | 114 | British | 114 | 2.1 | 10.5 |
| 1991/92 | 114 | 114 | British | 114 | 2.1 | 10.5 |
| 1991/92 | 114 | 114 | British | 114 | 2.1 | 10.5 |
| 1991/92 | 114 | 114 | British | 114 | 2.1 | 10.5 |
| 1991/92 | 114 | 114 | British | 114 | 2.1 | 10.5 |
| 1991/92 | 114 | 114 | British | 114 | 2.1 | 10.5 |
| 1991/92 | 114 | 114 | British | 114 | 2.1 | 10.5 |
| 1991/92 | 114 | 114 | British | 114 | 2.1 | 10.5 |
| 1991/92 | 114 | 114 | British | 114 | 2.1 | 10.5 |
| 1991/92 | 114 | 114 | British | 114 | 2.1 | 10.5 |


SHORTS (under 5 years)

| | | | | | | |
|---------|------|-----|---------|-------|---------|-------|
| 1991/92 | High | Low | Company | Price | Net Yld | % P/E |
| 1991/92 | 114 | 114 | Shorts | 114 | 2.1 | 10.5 |
| 1991/92 | 114 | 114 | Shorts | 114 | 2.1 | 10.5 |
| 1991/92 | 114 | 114 | Shorts | 114 | 2.1 | 10.5 |
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THE TIMES SATURDAY MARCH 21 1992

Scotland



CARD OF THANKS

With the prize gone there is still plenty to reach for as rugby union's five nations' championship closes

Scotland set their own goals

By GERALD DAVIES

WITH England having taken the valuable swag a fortnight ago, there is a marked tendency to dismiss this afternoon's match between Wales and Scotland at Cardiff Arms Park as of no real consequence. There are no prizes left to take. But, as Ian McGeechan, the Scotland coach, says, there are always things to play for in international rugby.

"Each match," he says, "is a contest in itself. There are different values to be aimed at, different goals to go for, depending on the stage of a team's development. It is different for us this year, say, compared to last year."

"For example, because of a number of factors, I have a new collection of players at my disposal now and my objectives have to change accordingly. It is not possible to play the same type of game when you have players of different abilities. My approach changes, so does that of the players."

After the World Cup, because of retirements and injuries, he has been forced into a period of rebuilding but finds that Scotland have performed with a degree of success that he might not have thought possible when the championship began. The loss of Jeffrey and Calder was, inevitably, a blow, but the absence through injury of the increasingly influential Gary Armstrong at scrum half — "a player of genuine world class," he adds — further dented his hopes. Even so, his team has made considerable progress.

"But for an indifferent performance," he said, "for a period of 40 minutes against England, we could have by now been challenging for grand slam ourselves tomorrow. There is still confidence in the team."

In adversity, too, he has found an immensely capable scrum half in Andy Nicol and



Man in the middle: McGeechan, with the Scotland team yesterday, is looking to continue rebuilding

the continuing improvement of Dodie Weir and Neil Edwards, at lock, are additional positive points. Weir, who Scotland seemed to be "carrying" last season, has developed substantially from his experiences in the World Cup. McGeechan, therefore, has been able to retain stability without taking any significant steps backwards. With two victories, his rebuilding remains on course.

Alan Davies, the Wales coach, with only one success, against the hapless Irish, may not, on the surface, be so certain of the development occurring within his team. With so much more to do — his nation's rugby had taken the severe battering with consequent loss of morale — his success is less tangible. His team's spirit is improving, the players happier under his guidance.

But he is aware that Wales's critical mass of supporters want victories. It is a slow learning process, where patience is required. The line-out nowadays is more profitable, the scrum steadier and the defence — something he sets much store by and was pleased with against England — is tighter. The questions

are: can they start scoring some points? Can they begin to start winning at home? The Welsh team shows three changes, and one positional, from that failed to score at Twickenham. Roger Bidgood wins his first cap to shore up the defence and provide some much-needed thrust in midfield. Emyr Lewis returns to the flank and

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Pride will provide motivation at Parc des Princes

By DAVID HANDS, RUGBY CORRESPONDENT

THE five nations' championship may be decided but it is not yet done — far from it: if nothing more, there is pride to play for, nowhere more than at the Parc des Princes today where France, more accustomed to the *haut* than the *bas* of the championship, meet an Irish side desperate to retrieve something from a disastrous season.

France have done much the same as Wales this season, for similar reasons. From the administrative chaos that followed the World Cup five short months ago, Pierre Berbizier has chosen a squad and stuck faithfully to it, save where expulsions obliged him to go outside. That it appears, from this side of the Channel, to be a squad of distinct limitations may mean only that French club rugby is not going through a vintage period.

The French are as prey to crises of confidence as any body else. Certainly, last confidence has been down hill this season, unreasonably so because one game — the World Cup quarter-final defeat by Australia — elevated expectation beyond the merit of the side itself.

None the less, a tolerably effective spine remains to the Irish XV. Few have worked harder than Steve Smith, Robinson and Aherne and the return of Murphy at full back has not harmed them. But it is the pivotal stand-off half position that has created such a sustained future — the departure of Brian Smith to rugby league a season ago may have pleased some people but it left a yawning hole.

Keys filled it during the World Cup, without ever getting the best out of his three

quarters, and now McAleese gets an unexpected chance at the age of 27. He has nothing to lose, nor has his team, by trying to carry the game to the French and at least alleviating some gloom before the departure in May for that most daunting of tasks — a tour of New Zealand.

Sella and Mesnel, the French centres, have, between them, more caps than the entire Irish side, but it is not in midfield where Ireland will hope to impose themselves. It is at forward, where the introduction of Paul Hogan at flanker may add something of the spirit which has carried Garryowen to the All-Ireland League title.

Suddenly an entirely new vista has opened for Hogan, aged 23, who works in the family garage business in Limerick. A spanner in the works of the French will present a convincing case for a tour overseas and, if he and Robinson can keep Heuber under guard, then the French backs will not have the freedom to run in the Parc's wide open spaces.

"So far, each of our games has produced something positive," Sella, the French captain, said. "We must now try to bring it all together."

The French have been bringing it together in Paris for more years than their guests care to remember. Ireland have never won at the Parc and have not succeeded in the French capital since 1972.

The last try Ireland scored there was by Freddie McLennan in 1980, when they lost 19-18, and even if the French are in crisis, they should still be able to complete an Irish whitewash, a fate they have not suffered since 1986.

| France | | Ireland | | |
|--------------------------------|----|--------------|---|----|
| J-L Sadourmy (Colomiers) | 15 | Full back | K J Murphy (Cork Constitution) | 15 |
| P Saint-André (Montferrand) | 14 | Right wing | R M Wallace (Garryowen) | 14 |
| P Sella ^a (Agen) | 13 | Right centre | D M Curtis (London Irish) | 13 |
| F Mesnel (Racing Club) | 12 | Left centre | P P A Danaher ^a (Garryowen) | 12 |
| S Viars (Bordeaux) | 11 | Left wing | S P Gaoghegan (London Irish) | 11 |
| A Penaud (Bordeaux) | 10 | Stand-off | D R McAleese (Bath) | 10 |
| A Hueber (Toulon) | 9 | Scrum half | L F P Aherne (Lansdowne) | 9 |
| L Army (Agen) | 1 | Prop | N J Popplewell (Garryowen) | 1 |
| J-P Genet (Racing Club) | 2 | Hooker | S J Smith (Bath) | 2 |
| P Gallari (Bordeaux) | 3 | Prop | G F Halpin (London Irish) | 3 |
| J-F Tordo (Nîmes) | 6 | Flanker | P Hogan (Garryowen) | 6 |
| J-M Cadieu (Toulon) | 4 | Lock | B J Rigney (Garryowen) | 4 |
| O Roumat (Dax) | 5 | Lock | M J Gahway (Shannon) | 5 |
| L Cabannes (Racing Club) | 7 | Flanker | M J Fitzgibbon (Shannon) | 7 |
| M Cécillon | 8 | No. 8. | B F Robinson | 8 |

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AMERICAN FOOTBALL

London begin defence of title

By RICHARD WETHERILL

EVEN for an organisation brought to fruition during a recession, the turnover in the World League of American Football (WLAF) is startling. Two presidents have come and gone, a franchise lost all ten games and folded, two teams had to find new head coaches and one has moved to another stadium.

The second season kicks off in Barcelona tonight and there is still much uncertainty in the air. Last year, nobody knew what to expect. This year, targets have been set but once again what the actual product will be like is unknown. A large influx of new players, especially much-needed quarterbacks, makes predicting outcomes a hazardous business.

The London Monarchs defend their title won last June with a new head coach, Ray Wilkey, and three new assistant coaches. Fewer than half of that side will play New York-New Jersey Knights tomorrow at Wembley and the suspension for the season of Jon Horton, a mainstay last year, hardly improves matters. Horton, who had been one of the league's leading receivers, was banned in midweek for an undisclosed reason.

Horton, aged 27, from Tucson, led the WLAF in reception yards last year with 931, an average of 21.7 yards per catch. He also had eight touchdowns and was voted to the WLAF's All-World team.

The goals for 1992 have been clearly stated by Joe Bailey, the league's chief operating officer, in the manner of a skyscraper builder — everything must go up. That means attendances, television ratings and corporate sponsors need to be increased.

Attracting higher attendances could prove a problem. Europe startled the league and flipped the projection of a 15,000 average here and 25,000 in the United States upside down. If Barcelona, Frankfurt and London do well again, the crowds will turn up, but that will affect the American figures. If the opposite occurs, will Europeans flock to watch losing teams?

Tomorrow's game is already the fourth meeting between the Knights and the Monarchs and a crowd of 30,000-plus is expected. London won the previous three, with varying degrees of difficulty, and the intense and instant rivalry that has developed means there will be another bruising encounter.

New York's potent offense has been improved and always caused problems for the Monarchs and London have Stan Gelbaugh, the World League's most valuable player in 1991, returning at quarterback.

MONARCHS FIXTURES: Tomorrow: New York-New Jersey Knights (N) March 21; Frankfurt Galaxy (F) April 4; Barcelona Dragons (B) April 11; London Monarchs (L) April 18; London Monarchs (L) April 25; London Monarchs (L) May 2; London Monarchs (L) May 9; London Monarchs (L) May 16; London Monarchs (L) May 23; London Monarchs (L) May 30; London Monarchs (L) June 6; London Monarchs (L) June 13; London Monarchs (L) June 20; London Monarchs (L) June 27; London Monarchs (L) July 4; London Monarchs (L) July 11; London Monarchs (L) July 18; London Monarchs (L) July 25; London Monarchs (L) August 1; London Monarchs (L) August 8; London Monarchs (L) August 15; London Monarchs (L) August 22; London Monarchs (L) August 29; London Monarchs (L) September 5; London Monarchs (L) September 12; London Monarchs (L) September 19; London Monarchs (L) September 26; London Monarchs (L) October 3; London Monarchs (L) October 10; London Monarchs (L) October 17; London Monarchs (L) October 24; London Monarchs (L) November 7; London Monarchs (L) November 14; London Monarchs (L) November 21; London Monarchs (L) November 28; London Monarchs (L) December 5; London Monarchs (L) December 12; London Monarchs (L) December 19; London Monarchs (L) December 26.

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Sabatini and Sánchez Vicario to meet in Florida final as men ponder the serve problem

Foot fault change is preferred

FROM ANDREW LONGMORE, TENNIS CORRESPONDENT IN KEY BISCAYNE

IT WAS mainly jaw-jaw at the Lipton International yesterday as representatives of all sections of the game gathered to discuss the speed of the game. The war could come later, if the International Tennis Federation (ITF), which has already caused a stir this week by proposing to abolish the "let" rule, takes action on its favoured option of returning to the pre-1959 foot fault law whereby players have to keep one foot grounded behind the baseline until the ball is hit.

"That would be the easiest way of slowing down the game," Tony Gathercole, spokesman for the ITF's rules committee, told a seminar, organised by the Association of Tennis Professionals, yesterday. "There would obviously have to be a test period before we changed anything and the players would need 12-18 months' notice so that they could get used to it."

The idea has already been discussed by the ITF, but, as yet, there has been no firm commitment to implementing it. The ITF — and, it seems on the evidence of yesterday's debate, many people in the game — have not yet been convinced that tennis does need to be slowed down. "We are concerned about the quality of the game and its spectator value. But it is not yet proven that anything needs to be done. But if it does what should be done?" The foot fault change is preferable to altering the dimensions of the court, which would be too costly, Gathercole added.

Such a change might not go down too well with the big servers, who already feel they are being picked on. "Will they take away Jim Courier's forehead or cut off Chang's feet? Those are their big weapons. I think there is some discrimination against

the big servers," David Wheaton, a Wimbledon semi-finalist and a member of the players panel at yesterday's forum, said.

Grass provided the most dramatic evidence of the growing pace of play. In an analysis of eight Wimbledon finals between 1969 and 1991, the ATP found that the time of the average point had dropped from 3.8sec in the 1970s to 2.7sec last year. Partly because of the increased length of time between changeovers and between points, the amount of time the ball was actually in play during an hour had been reduced from 7min 18sec to 3min 55sec. Food for thought for the All England Club at least.

Steffi Graf was another concerned with the service. She was appalled at her own as she let a promising start turn into an all too familiar 3-6, 7-6, 6-1 defeat by Gabriela Sabatini in the semi-final here.

Sabatini, who meets Arantxa Sánchez Vicario in the final today, has Graf's number these days. She has won six of their last seven matches and leads 7-1 in Florida. No wonder Graf, who has a house in the state, does not want to live here permanently.

London: Turkey were thrown out of the 1992 Davis Cup by the international federation after failing to make arrangements to host a match against Cyprus in May. The Cyprus team, unable to gain Turkish visas, have been given a walkover.

Earlier this month, a Turkish request for the tie to be held in a neutral country was rejected. Turkey invaded Cyprus in 1974. They still hold the northern part of the island, but their claim to it is not internationally recognised.



Taste of victory: Sabatini celebrates another defeat of Graf

Cambridge suffer in foursomes

CAMBRIDGE suffered an unexpected setback in the foursomes of the University golf match at Deal yesterday (John Hennessy writes). Strong favourites to register their sixth victory in successive years, an achievement last recorded, by Oxford, at the turn of the last century, they were beaten by 3½ to 1½.

Oxford seemed to have generated greater team spirit and, on the technical side, Peter Green, a former Walker Cup player turned professional, looked to have worked wonders.

This was no more apparent than in the top match, in which Cambridge opened with the formidable force of Bryan Ingleby, captain last year, and Chris Ambler, another blue.

In the event, they hardly got a look in. Simon Jenkins, profiting from the experience of caddying on the European tour, and Frank Cadz, a Zimbabwean, were four up at the turn in the morning, seven up at lunch and still seven up at the 30th when Ambler missed the green.

Results, page 37

Woosnam slides from top

FROM MITCHELL PLATTS, GOLF CORRESPONDENT, IN ORLANDO

IAN Woosnam yesterday forfeited the No. 1 place in the Sony World rankings when he failed to survive the halfway cut in the Nestlé Invitational tournament here on the Bay Hill course.

Woosnam has held pole position for 48 weeks, but either Fred Couples or Nick Faldo will be in the No. 1 place when "The Players" Championship begins on Thursday. Couples, however, must win and Faldo, despite winning only one tournament in the last 16 months, would seem most likely to return to the top.

The Welshman indicated before this tournament, only his third in three months, that his game was not in the groove and by attaching a second round of 74 to his opening 76, he confirmed his own worst fears. The one bright spot was an eagle three at the 16th, but he finished with a total of 150, six over par.

Woosnam is worried about his putting. But his usually well-oiled swing is also causing him concern. The blustery conditions presented additional problems, but Woosnam was wilder than usual off the tee. He will need to locate and repair the fault at The Players' Championship next week to be in the right frame of mind for his defence of the New Orleans Classic, let alone the Masters.

Two birdies in the first six holes gave Woosnam something on which to build, but as the wind freshened so the Welshman was blown off course. He had three bogies in succession from the 7th, turned in 38 and thereafter searched for inspiration with little success.

Meanwhile Colin Montgomerie retired to the clubhouse grilling to digest his disappointment, following a second round of 78, which gave him a score of 149. Bernhard Langer took 73 for 148 and he felt he would be fortunate to escape the guillotine.

Montgomerie's first tilt at the US PGA Tour appeared to be over. He looked a disconsolate figure as he shuffled away.

He deserved some sympathy. A seven at the 18th, where he hit his second into the water provided Montgomerie much on which to ponder. His drive had finished in a hole in the rough from where he tried to dig the ball out with a three iron.

Montgomerie shapes the ball from left to right and, with the water to the right and the pin 206 yards ahead, it appeared rather ambitious of him to attempt to find the target. The ball crashed on to rocks and ricocheted into the water.

He would do well to look back on another shot which, though witnessed by only a handful of spectators, must rank as one of the finest of his career. At the 15th he was blocked out by a bush, but, with the pin bending in the wind 180 yards ahead, he bent a five-iron shot around the bush on to the green.

John Huston, of the United States, led the early halfway lead, following a 71 for a score of 139. Nick Faldo and David Fehery were among the late starters.



Couples win a must

Quiros moves into lead at halfway stage

THE Spanish domination of this season's European golf tour continued today as Juan Quiros fired an 11-birdie 65 to establish a two-stroke halfway lead in the Portuguese Open at Vila Sol.

Christy O'Connor Jr lies second with Anders Forsbrand, of Sweden, after his second successive 68, but his uncle, Christy Sr, aged 67, invited to play with borrowed clubs while on holiday in the Algarve, chose not to hand his card in after adding an 83 to his opening 79.

The defending champion, Steve Richardson, also missed the cut after going out of bounds and taking an eight on the long 11th.

José-María Olazábal, José Rivero and Severiano Ballesteros, who have won five of the seven titles so far and lead the Order of Merit, are all absent this week but Quiros kept his country's flag flying high despite having four bogies. His birdie haul was only one short of Fred Couples's tour record.

Quiros's round stood as a course record for a mere 20 minutes, because Peter Senior, of Australia, blasting nine birdies in a 64 that lifted him to joint fifth at six-under.

ENGLAND'S attempt to win the cricket World Cup for the first time, which began so well, has faltered under the weight of injuries. For the last group match on Wednesday — an embarrassing defeat by Zimbabwe — they struggled to field 11 fit players and since their campaign began four weeks ago, more than half the squad has been injured or ill.

Yet, when the party left for New Zealand in December, it was widely proclaimed the fittest England team to leave these shores. Bad luck or bad preparation? Over-trained or under-trained? The cynics, needless to say, have had a field day.

Players, physiotherapists and doctors specialising in sports injuries, however, seem agreed that the nature of the modern game, with its far greater physical demands, and on this occasion the structure of the World Cup itself, have much to do with England's problems.

And indeed the other teams in the competition, whose injuries have received rather less coverage here.

Tom McNab, the leading athletics coach who supervised the England rugby team's physical preparations during the Rugby World Cup, said: "What we are asking is, is the nature of the tournament antithetical to the health of the players?" The answer seems to be a resounding "yes".

"I'm not surprised by the injuries, it is such an appallingly structured tour, with high pressure games and constant travel. Take the shambles in Ballarat when they had to change hotels because the beds weren't big

enough," Dr John King, the director of the department of Sports Medicine at London Hospital Medical College, said.

John Brewer, the head of the Human Performance Centre at the Football Association's Sports Medicine Institute at Lilleshall, who supervised the team's fitness preparations, is equally scathing. "They are playing once every three or four days," Brewer, who has just returned from Australia, said.

"In the day-night matches, they don't get back to the hotel until the early hours, they get a few hours' sleep and then it's off to the next venue — three to four hours on a plane and the inevitable hour at the airport either end. Then they have to practice. The most important thing in fitness is rest and recovery time, and they are not getting any."

But the biggest problem of all is running on a squad of 14. In the Football World Cup, they played less games, and had squads of 22.

Cricket itself, by the sporadic nature of its demands, lends itself to pulls and strains. The injuries in Australia have led some experts to question the preparations, but Brewer insists that the players were correctly prepared.

"Had they not prepared as well as they did, there could well have been more injuries," he said.

That suggests that the tournament itself, combining excessive travel, inadequate rest and a series of high-pressure games in a short space of time, puts unbearable demands on the players. "Intensity combined with short recovery periods is a recipe for injuries," McNab said.

Yet, the cricketers are the only international team to go abroad without its own doctor, an astonishing omission.

"It is quite worrying," Dr Tom Crisp, the medical adviser to Essex, said. "I'm sure that Lawrie Brown [the physiotherapist] is capable of dealing with the common things I am not sure that any physiotherapist can always correctly diagnose the uncommon things and the local services are not as good as they should be."

Crisp approached Ted Dexter and Micky Stewart before the tour, but was told that there was no money available to pay for a doctor. But the England women's hockey team took both a doctor and a sports psychologist with it on its trip to Australia.

"To be fit for one-day cricket means being mutually alert for three hours," King said. "A sports psychologist with the team is at least as important as a doctor in enabling it to cope with stress."

It is ironic that England are as close tomorrow, when they meet South Africa in Sydney in the semi-final, to having a full complement of players to choose from as at any time in the World Cup.

| | P | W | L | NR | Pts | NetR |
|--------------|---|---|---|----|-----|-------|
| New Zealand | 8 | 7 | 1 | 0 | 14 | +0.59 |
| England | 8 | 5 | 2 | 1 | 11 | +0.47 |
| South Africa | 8 | 5 | 3 | 0 | 10 | +0.13 |
| Pakistan | 8 | 4 | 3 | 1 | 9 | +0.18 |
| Australia | 8 | 4 | 4 | 0 | 8 | +0.20 |
| West Indies | 8 | 4 | 4 | 0 | 8 | +0.07 |
| India | 8 | 2 | 5 | 1 | 5 | +0.14 |
| Sri Lanka | 8 | 2 | 5 | 1 | 5 | -0.68 |
| Zimbabwe | 8 | 1 | 7 | 0 | 2 | -1.14 |

SATURDAY MARCH 21 1992

Injury clouds clear for England's World Cup semi-final against a buoyant South Africa

Gooch's odyssey turns full circle

FROM ALAN LEE, CRICKET CORRESPONDENT, IN SYDNEY

SOUTH Africa was a refuge for Graham Gooch in the spring of 1982, when he had mislaid the ambition to go on playing for his country. Now, precisely ten years on, the reincarnation of Gooch finds South Africa barring his way to an ambition he has pursued with passion.

It is a barely believable scenario. Gooch did not know if he would play for England again when he made his unsanctioned tour. The one thing he thought he knew for certain was that he would never play for England against South Africa.

Now, his liaison with the forbidden land long since forgiven and forgotten, his re-adoption by England so complete that he runs the show, it has happened to Gooch, one match away from the climax of his many months of patient planning. Gooch missed the World Cup group game against South Africa through injury and feared he would not get a second chance. But if tomorrow's semi-final at the Sydney Cricket Ground is special to the England captain, it is nothing short of staggering to the South Africans, at the end of a week in which they have experienced extremes of elation and anxiety.

On Sunday, against most expectations, they qualified for the semi-finals. On Monday, once the heads were clear of hangers, they began to wonder if they would be free to play it. Tuesday brought the referendum, with all its accompanying fears. Wednesday was a day of fretful waiting, and then came an explosion of relief.

The referendum vote has given Kepler Wessels and his side a future in international sport, a future which begins right here. Wessels' job now is to sweep away the emotion and reduce the playing of this highly charged game to the basics at which his players have excelled.

Gooch's job, these past few days, has been slightly different. His team has arrived on a wing and a prayer after a nightmarish defeat by Zimbabwe. "It is like losing to a minor county back home," Alec Stewart, the vice-captain, suggested yesterday. "You know it can happen but you never think it will happen to your side."

There were no melodramatics from Gooch after

Albury. It is not his style. "We didn't have an inquest or anything like that," he said. "It would not have been productive. I am more interested in getting everyone to look at the next game."

Up to last night, it was possible that, for the first time in the competition, England might have a full squad of 14 from which to select. Derek Pringle has had a cortisone injection in his rib muscle and was planning to bowl in the nets today. The odds remain heavily against him but the rest of the headlines are encouraging. Dermot Reeve and Chris Lewis both expect to take a full part and Gooch has had no adverse reaction from his hamstring.

Even discounting Pringle, this poses a healthy selection problem. Gooch strongly indicated, last night, that only one of the specialist spin bowlers will play—I hope it is Tufnell—but he would not be drawn on the intended balance. Throughout the tournament, however, Gooch has preached the benefits of bowling options and he would be loath to go into such an important game with only five regular bowlers plus Graeme Hick's off spin. Hence, the likelihood must be that Gladstone Small will be chosen and a batsman sacrificed.

It can hardly be Neil Fairbrother, whose flair won the group game against South Africa, and Hick's all-round contribution makes him indispensable. The choice, hugely ironical, must be between the South African-born pair, Robin Smith and Allan Lamb.

Smith has descended into the mental morass that too often engulfs him when form is elusive. His batting becomes increasingly wooden, his brow increasingly furrowed, and the practice nets are seldom without his presence until, one day, the memory takes over and the lost instincts return to his game.

It would be far more logical to omit Lamb, however heart-breaking it would be for him. Surprisingly, England did not miss him during his injury absence and he has done nothing, in the two defeats in which he has played, to demand retention. If nothing else, Smith's superior fielding ought to swing the issue.

Once they decide upon an eleven, England must form a plan to combat the increas-



Lamb's lean: the England batsman sways out of the way of a delivery in the nets in Sydney yesterday

Pick breaks down in nets

FROM RICHARD STREETON IN KINGSTOWN, ST VINCENT

ingly confident South Africans. One option, no longer so outrageous after New Zealand's success, would be to use Tufnell with the new ball. Mike Procter, the South Africa coach, hinted yesterday that the formula of five quick bowlers will be retained. Brian McMillan, vital to the balance, will play.

President de Klerk, who has been in frequent contact with the team, will doubtless be on the phone again should they win tomorrow, a result that would bring South Africa to a jubilant standstill.

England, meanwhile, can expect their prime minister to divert attention from election issues for a match with such fantasy attached it might have been scripted by the Walt Disney of one-day cricket. "Everyone dreams of playing matches like this one," Gooch said. Most of all, he might have added, everyone dreams of winning them.

Semi-final averages, page 36
Fitness and injury, page 36

England A might have to go into the second, unofficial Test match with West Indies A at Arnos Vale near here today without both their leading fast bowlers. Andy Pick broke down in the nets yesterday with a recurrence of a groin-muscle strain. Devon Malcolm had his first bowl for a week after his back spasm last weekend and will wait until this morning to see if he has any reaction.

Pick has been troubled by groin and thigh muscle strains for most of the tour. He got through the first Test last week, but after half an hour in the nets yesterday, was unable to continue. Malcolm is considered only 70 per cent fit but, in Pick's absence, England badly need him to play.

Even at reduced pace, Malcolm is yards faster than his other England bowler. He

has been assured that he will do no permanent damage to his back if he can play even if not completely recovered.

Both Croft and Watkin, the two Glamorgan bowlers, are included in the England 12, with Salisbury dropping out, in keeping with a deliberate policy to give everybody a chance in the four-day games. If Malcolm plays, either Croft or Munton will be omitted.

Keith Fletcher, the team manager, said about the definite selection of Croft, the off spinner: "Winning matches is important, but our main purpose on this tour is to find Test players. There is no point in bringing young men and then not picking them."

The six fit England batsmen chose themselves, with Hussain not yet ready to challenge for a place. Hussain's fractured finger

has mended sufficiently to allow him to start gentle, net practice but he will not be considered for selection until the third unofficial Test in Barbados next week.

West Indies, who won the first Test, have also deferred their final selection.

WEST INDIES A (from): C A Walsh (captain), J D Adams, C A Best, K C G Bell, J D Brown, A H Ganga, R G Hughes, L A Joseph, C B Lambert, J H Murray, N O Perry, R B Stuarth.

ENGLAND A (from): H Morris (captain), D J Blore, M R Fitzpatrick, P Johnson, G P Thorpe, J P Thompson, S J Rhodes, R D B Cook, T A Munton, D G Cook, S L Watson, D E Maloney.

Umpires: G Johnson and D Archer.
□ Malcolm Marshall, who in 12 years of top-class performances took 376 Test wickets for the West Indies and was among the most feared fast bowlers in the 1980s, has retired from international cricket.

West Ham may face another pitch invasion

BY CLIVE WHITE

WEST Ham United face the prospect of a further pitch invasion at Upton Park today by supporters demonstrating against the club's proposed

debenture scheme, just 24 hours after the Football Association charged the club for disruptions to games against Everton and Arsenal in the last three weeks.

An appeal by Peter Storr, the club's managing director, to supporters to behave at today's game against Queen's Park Rangers is likely to fall upon deaf ears. Protesters have promised to demonstrate at every game for the rest of the season unless the club drop their plans for the contentious £15 million bond scheme.

The game against Everton was interrupted for several minutes by about 200 supporters and there were three minor stoppages against Arsenal. The club can expect to be fined for these breaches of the rules governing the behaviour of spectators, but persistent infringement of them could result in a deduction of points for the first division's bottom club.

Anders Limpar, who was omitted from last week's match at Upton Park, is expected to return for Arsenal in the televised match against Leeds United at Highbury tomorrow. Limpar scored both goals in last season's 2-2 draw in the league fixture at Elland Road and also scored in their marathon FA Cup fourth-round duel last season with the Yorkshire club.

If Leeds are to remain on top of the league by the end of the weekend, they may need at least a point from the game, that is if Manchester United defeat Wimbledon today. United, who are waiting to see whether Bryan Robson will recover from calf and shin injuries, would have to win by a margin of six goals to provide Leeds with the task of winning at Highbury to regain the leadership.

Leeds have not beaten Arsenal in seven attempts under Howard Wilkinson, their manager, but should be lifted if Tony Dorico, their England full back, recovers from injury as expected. Arsenal, unbeaten in seven games, have their own target:

| FIRST DIVISION | | | | | | | | | |
|----------------|----|----|----|----|----|----|-----|--|--|
| | P | W | D | L | F | A | Pts | | |
| Leeds Utd. | 34 | 13 | 3 | 18 | 34 | 20 | 57 | | |
| Man Utd. | 34 | 11 | 3 | 20 | 24 | 65 | 55 | | |
| Sheff Wed. | 33 | 16 | 9 | 8 | 53 | 45 | 57 | | |
| Man City | 33 | 15 | 8 | 10 | 45 | 40 | 53 | | |
| Liverpool | 32 | 13 | 13 | 8 | 38 | 28 | 52 | | |
| Arsenal | 32 | 13 | 11 | 10 | 55 | 36 | 50 | | |
| Everton | 34 | 11 | 13 | 10 | 42 | 36 | 46 | | |
| QPR | 34 | 10 | 15 | 9 | 38 | 37 | 45 | | |
| Chelsea | 34 | 11 | 12 | 11 | 42 | 47 | 45 | | |
| C Palace | 34 | 11 | 12 | 11 | 44 | 53 | 45 | | |
| North Forest | 31 | 12 | 8 | 14 | 47 | 42 | 44 | | |
| Aston Villa | 33 | 12 | 7 | 15 | 36 | 43 | 41 | | |
| Wimbledon | 33 | 10 | 12 | 11 | 36 | 41 | 42 | | |
| Newcastle | 33 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 40 | 44 | 41 | | |
| Oldham | 34 | 11 | 7 | 16 | 51 | 57 | 40 | | |
| Coventry | 33 | 10 | 9 | 14 | 30 | 32 | 39 | | |
| Sheff Utd. | 32 | 10 | 7 | 15 | 48 | 53 | 37 | | |
| Tottenham | 31 | 10 | 6 | 18 | 37 | 41 | 36 | | |
| Southampton | 32 | 8 | 10 | 14 | 30 | 45 | 34 | | |
| Luton | 34 | 7 | 11 | 16 | 27 | 32 | 32 | | |
| Nottingham | 33 | 7 | 10 | 16 | 33 | 46 | 31 | | |
| West Ham | 31 | 6 | 9 | 16 | 26 | 46 | 27 | | |

a top three place, in order that they might qualify for Europe next season.

Tottenham Hotspur, staring in the face of relegation, are concerned about the fitness of Gary Lineker for a match of crucial importance to them at Anfield against Liverpool. He has a sore throat and did not train yesterday. Liverpool, still looking for a high league placing despite their involvement in the FA Cup, are without Mark Wright, Ray Houghton and Mark Walters.

However, there was good news yesterday for their mid-field player, Michael Thomas, who has landed the chance to resurrect his England career in time for the European championship finals. Yesterday, Thomas, who moved to Merseyside from Arsenal this season in a £1.5 million deal, was called up for next week's trip to Czechoslovakia, replacing the Crystal Palace midfielder, Geoff Thomas.

Thomas's Anfield colleague, Wright, and the Manchester United defender, Paul Parker, who both suffered hamstring injuries in midweek, have also been forced to pull out of Taylor's squad, as has Stephen Pears, the Middlesbrough goalkeeper. Pears, who had been named for the first time, could still play for his club in tomorrow's second division game against Brighton.

Crystal Palace's Nigel Martyn—he has four caps—is elevated from the stand-by list, along with Keith Currie, Earl Barrett and Thomas.

Jockey Club to hold Gold Cup enquiry

JENNY Pitman and Michael Bowley will be called before a Jockey Club enquiry over the way Golden Freeze ran against Carvill's Hill in the Cheltenham Gold Cup (Richard Evans writes).

Yesterday's announcement follows a week of controversy, including threats of legal action, over the tactics employed by the Pitman team and their possible effect on Carvill's Hill.

Ridden by Peter Scudamore, Carvill's Hill made a series of errors as Golden Freeze, ridden by Bowley, jumped alongside on the first circuit. Martin Pipe's chaser finished last and is unlikely to run again.

After the race, Richard

Hitchins, owner of Golden Freeze, said his horse had "exposed" Carvill's Hill and "played him like a violin with great jumping and by going backwards and forwards".

No date has been fixed for the enquiry, which will consider whether Pitman and her jockey committed a breach of Rule 15.

The rule concerns riders and trainers "preventing or trying to prevent in any way any horse from winning a race or obtaining the best possible placing".

The threats of legal action follow remarks which Scudamore said Bowley had made to him during the race.

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A plastic poser in the field

AMAZING athletic innovations from the United States. Certainly, their Olympic track and field trials in June should be unforgettable. The hammer will be murderously bouncing head-high across the stadium and the javelin could cause thousands of dollars worth of damage. Ludicrously, the event takes place in a stadium with artificial turf on the infield. Hammers will bounce like ping pong balls and javelins could do anything—including stick in the plastic, which doesn't grow back too well.

"At no time did the committee know there was going to be an artificial turf," Pat Rico, of the site selection committee, said. "I feel like we mentioned it," the trials director, Sam Seemes, commented.

The trials will take place at the Tad Gormley stadium in

New Orleans. "What is the potential danger for a hammer ricocheting into an official?" the top American hammer man, Ken Flax, asked. In the early Seventies, a 10,000-metre runner had his leg broken at Meadowbank in Edinburgh when a hammer bounced into him from a rubberised track.

The javelin could not only damage the plastic; they could be damaged themselves by the hard surface underneath—and they cost a lot of money these days. In 1979, in Montreal, they tried to get around this effect by laying hundreds of squares of green paper mache on the plastic surface.

The hammer is scheduled to take place at a time when spectators will be in the stadium: since field-events people grouse about being poor relations at the best of times, you can imagine how delighted they are about this. "If hammer throwing doesn't have a black eye as it is, let's give it another one," Flax humphed.

□ Did you know that 54 per cent of adult Swedes take

SIMON BARNES ON SATURDAY

part in sport or "recreational exercise" and only 35 per cent of Brits? The European league table, as supplied by the Central Statistical Office of Sweden, goes like this, with all figures given in percentages: Sweden 54, Ireland 48, Luxembourg 42, Denmark 39, France 35, Britain 35, West Germany (old figures obviously) 34, Belgium 34, The Netherlands 32, Portugal 28, Greece 26, Spain 25, Italy 23.

Pray silence

HEAR the words of the Rev Andrew Wingfield Digby, the England cricket team chaplain and old friend of this column: "A cricket match provides many times of quiet watching and waiting. I try to fill these moments with prayer and cultivate a quiet presence

Eddie's heir

THE first Lowlanders ski jumping championship took place recently and yes! A Brit won. No, not Eddie: it was Alan Jones. Eddie couldn't be there. The event, which also included a Nordic combined and many cross-country competitions, had 270 competitors and was the largest Lowlanders Nordic event ever held. The hero of the ski jumping event was Dunstan Odeke, a newcomer to jumping. Odeke, based in the ski jumping Mecca of Holland Park, finished last, had a bad fall, but, according to the event's organiser, Tim Ashburner, "has more guts than you find down a ten-foot python in his native Uganda".

Italian job
A quiet week at the Italian first division club, Foggia. Igor Shalimov stormed out of training, kicked in the dressing-room door and burst into tears. Next, local journalists were stoned by supporters. Last Sunday, the

chairman, Pasquale Casillo, made a sudden verbal attack on one of the journo, Antonio Troisi, to such effect that poor Troisi succumbed to a crise de nerfs and needed treatment from the club doctor. Casillo then resigned in midweek with the words: "I can't stand it any more. I have to leave this chaos." Meanwhile, a supporter named Emilio Cavelli has attacked the anxious Troisi and announced that he will see to him with a knife. Cavelli was recently featured in the Foggia fanzine leading an appeal against football violence.

□ I have no problem with footballers wearing earrings, but is it right and proper to wear them on the pitch? When Tottenham played Feyenoord in midweek, that gloriously-named pair, Ulrich van Gobbel and John de Wolf, were both sparkling about the earhole. Gary Lineker Gougied by Enforcer's Earring? One to worry readers of the Lineker fanzine, Ooh Gary Gary.

WEEKEND TIMES

SATURDAY MARCH 21 1992



Thank you, thank you, but I couldn't have done it without (from left): James Fox, John Thaw, Eugene Terre-Blanche, Sean Bean and Saskia Wickham, Helen Mirren, Robert Lindsay, Paul Merton and Vic Reeves, to name just a few

The really difficult thing about setting up your own personal Bafta awards is not so much deciding on the winners, as fitting all the celebrities into the bathroom. "Do your own Bafta awards," those nice people at *The Times* commanded. "Have a good time." Looking back on this now, I have a nasty feeling they wanted me just to nominate a few of my favourite television programmes and announce some winners (total cost: zero). Imagine their surprise next Monday morning, then, when I present them with Robert de Niro's personal appearance fee, and sting them for the cost of the gold statuette. Unfortunately, the whole thing burgeoned out of my control. I started out with a few modest notions about gilt envelopes and Joanna Lumley, and before I knew it a 30-piece orchestra from Vegas was rehearsing the opening bars of "It's Not Unusual" and "New York, New York".

Of course, tomorrow night you can see the real thing, televised live from the Grosvenor House hotel. All the hubbub and excitement. All those serious-looking broadcasters, with their domed heads and spectacles (utterly indistinguishable one from another, except to members of their own breed). All those glamorous actresses in ill-advised sparkly frocks (usually with a sleeve missing, suggestive of a recent scuffle with a revolving door). The Bafta awards ceremony makes unmissable TV, of course, but mainly because you don't really expect it to. You start watching it with cool disinterest; with no particular axe to grind. Yet as each nomination is announced, your involvement is hooked up exponentially until you finally care so much whether Ian Richardson has beaten Albert Finney to Best Actor that you find you have distractedly pulled out your eyebrows and eaten them.

We will dispense here with all the transatlantic link-up nonsense involving film, and get straight down to our nominations for home-grown TV, by and large sticking to the categories used by Bafta itself. All nominations, judgments and comments are entirely personal, and I apologise for the whole thing in advance. I am wearing a diamante-encrusted scarlet sarong, by the way; and the chirpy theme-music mysteriously selected to accompany my many entrances is "Boiled Beef and Carrots". Which is enough scene-setting, I think. So let's begin.

BEST FACTUAL SERIES

The trouble with this category is that it embraces virtually everything on TV, from arts to current affairs to *James Randi: Psychic Investigator*. Last year it was won by *The Trials of Life* (a popular choice); but each year's short list is annoyingly dominated by the continuing documentary "strands" such as *First Tuesday* and *40 Minutes* — which is a bit difficult for the viewer to get a hold on, really, since we can't help thinking of all the mediocre editions of *40 Minutes* and *First Tuesday* we

have had to endure while waiting for the really good ones to come along. Departing completely from the Bafta shortlist, my own nominations are: *Culloden* (BBC2), *From Wimps to Warriors* (BBC2), *Inside Story* (BBC1), *The Second Russian Revolution* (BBC2). It seemed to me that *Inside Story* scored a generally higher proportion of hits — remember the "Yellow Line" film about London's dampers and towers-away? — and that the other three series were self-evidently gripping telly, from which you learnt things you really wanted to know. The alarming male narcissism revealed in the wimps series was particularly unforgettable ("Ready for my close-up, Mr de Mille" might have been its sub-title), which is why *From Wimps to Warriors* wins this category by a short nippie and a tuft of chest-hair. The award is presented by Mollie Sugden to a man with no clothes on.

BEST DRAMA SERIES

Usually, this is lumped in with "Drama Serial". The difference (for people who do not work in broadcasting) is that if you miss an episode from a serial, you have to piece people up to find out what happened. Whereas if you miss an episode from a series, you don't notice, because each story is largely self-contained. Drama series in 1991, then, included *Agatha Christie's Poirot*, *Spenders*, *Ashenden*, *Shrinks*, *The Advocates* and *Joan Collins: Tonight at 8.30* — some of which were missable altogether, when you come to think of it. Nominations in this category are: *The Bill* (Thames), *Casualty* (BBC1), *Inspector Morse* (Central). But there is no winner, because I honestly don't care enough. I hope this is all right. The band strikes up "Boiled Beef and Carrots" again, in some confusion. (It had been practising *The Bill* theme tune for the majority of the day.)

BEST DRAMA SERIAL

This is the really important one, where G.B.H. and *Prime Suspect* will probably battle it out tomorrow night. Rather daringly, I omit G.B.H. from the list here, because although it was entertaining and wonderfully acted and beautifully produced, I seem to remember that it wasn't actually about anything very much in the end. I also omit, more in anger than sorrow, *The Orchid House*, *Chimera*, *Tillemus Regained* and *Jute City* — all of which testify, I think, to the cock-up theory of television. My nominations are: *Clarissa* (BBC2), *The Men's Room* (BBC2), *Prime Suspect* (Granada), *Sleepers* (BBC2). And the joint winners are *Clarissa* and *Prime Suspect* — *Clarissa* for being fresh, intelligent and moving; *Prime Suspect* for being the

Lights, action, loofah

most exciting thriller in living memory. Both seem delighted. William Kennedy Smith wonders out loud why he has been flown in specially to make the award to *Clarissa*, but everyone goes quiet.

BEST SINGLE DRAMA

Alan Bennett's *A Question of Attribution* seems likely to win this category tomorrow night. My own nominations are: *Events at Drimaghleen* (BBC2), *My Kingdom for a Horse* (BBC1), *A Question of Attribution* (BBC1), *The Trials of Oz* (BBC2). John Godber's *My Kingdom for a Horse* (shown last March) was a gentle, charming play about a mild-mannered history teacher (Sean Bean) whose weekend Sealed Knot excursions (set battles with pretend weapons) beautifully underlined the emotional cowardice that was in danger of ruining his life. *Events at Drimaghleen*, adapted from a William Trevor story (and directed by Robert Cooper, who produced the recently broadcast *Truly, Madly, Deeply*), concerned a mysterious triple shooting at a farm in a poor Irish community, and the insensitivity of a documentary film crew who invade from London to reconstruct the "events". It was a resonant and painful play, and I watched it three times. I think it should win, really. A specially cut-down lecture is discreetly brought on for Dustin Hoffman to make the award.

BEST COMEDY

Recently, on a Sunday evening, I was just puzzling over episode three of the pleasant Judi Dench-Geoffrey Palmer vehicle *As Time Goes By* when a continuity announcer said: "And now, the comedy continues on BBC1 with *One Foot in the Grave*." And I thought, "Hang on, get a grip, is this all supposed to be comedy, then? And if so, why haven't I laughed once in the past half hour?" I seem to be suffering from category confusion; and doing these damned Bafta awards does not help. I mean, where does a hilarious serial such as *Gone to the Dogs* (Central) fit in? Nowhere, probably. Rather grudgingly, then, my nominations are: *Drop the Dead Donkey* (Channel 4), *One Foot in the Grave* (BBC1)

Lynne Truss slips into a sarong and pre-empts tomorrow's Bafta awards from the glittering intimacy of her bathroom

TWO POINT FOUR CHILDREN

(BBC1) And the winner is Andrew Marshall's *Two Point Four Children*, because it was fast-moving and original, and included one of my favourite sitcom lines of the year, viz: "I understand testosterone explodes on contact with saucapans." To save time, I might also say here that Belinda Lang should receive Light Entertainment Performance of the Year as well, seeing as Angus Deayton doesn't qualify. Tension is mounting among the audience, by the way, and it is getting hot.

BEST LIGHT ENTERTAINMENT

The odd thing about this category is that it seems to bear no relation to "Best Light Entertainment Performance", which is the province of actors rather than comedians. Perhaps they think we won't notice. My nominations are: *Have I Got News For You?* (BBC2), *Paul Merton: The Series* (Channel 4), *Vic Reeves Big Night Out* (Channel 4), *Whose Line Is It Anyway?* (Channel 4). And the award goes to *Have I Got News For You?* because Angus Deayton's links and intrus are the wittiest stuff on television.

BEST ACTRESS, BEST ACTOR

I am beginning to enjoy this. I keep dipping back into tapes of *Prime Suspect* and getting all wrapped up in it again. It's amazing how you can still say, "They've just got to find Marlowe's car!" when you already know perfectly well that it's in a lock-up at King's Cross.

Anyway, my nominations are: Lindsay Duncan: *G.B.H.*, Helen Mirren: *Prime Suspect*, Saskia Reeves: *In My Defence*, Prunella Scales: *A Question of Attribution*, Zoe Wanamaker: *Prime Suspect*, Sean Bean: *Clarissa*, Tom Bell: *Prime Suspect*, Robert Lindsay: *G.B.H.*, Leslie Phillips: *The Trials of Oz*. The winner of "best actress" is Helen Mirren. (And if you don't like it, sergeant, you can apply for a transfer. Got that?) Winner of "best actor" is Robert Lindsay, which makes me feel like God, actually, because God would have given it to Robert Lindsay, too. Unfortunately, neither of the winners is actually in attendance, so we have to phone them up, which takes about 20 minutes. Helen Mirren says she is in the middle of having a fireplace put in; can she phone us back? I say no, it's OK. The band, which is becoming a law unto itself, strikes up "Chim, Chimney" from *Mary Poppins*.

BEST ARTS PROGRAMME

No fewer than three *South Bank Shows* are nominated in the official Bafta list — which certainly makes you feel you must be missing something, doesn't it? My top five individual programmes are: *Arena: The Human Face* (BBC2), *Arena: The Strange Story of Joe Meek* (BBC2), *Accuse: Robert McKee on Citizen Kane* (Channel 4), *Relative Values: The Art Dealer* (BBC2), *Without Walls: Selling Murder* (Channel 4). The *Relative Values* programme probably doesn't qualify as a single documentary, but I grow tired of these silly constraints. Away with care, say I. BBC moles have told me, moreover, that *Relative Values* was also considered a bit of a shambles, production-wise. But its revelations about the art market were invaluable to an ignoramus like me. *Selling Murder* was a fascinating film about Nazi euthanasia propaganda: Robert McKee's half-hour illustrated lecture was a brilliant and entertaining attack on *Citizen Kane*. Meanwhile the *Arena* on Joe Meek (a maverick 1960s record producer whose hits included "Telstar") was atmospheric and kooky, and evoked the era so powerfully that you could actually

smell the vinyl of the records. It also memorably included Joe Meek's own recording of a conversation with a so-called supernatural cat in a graveyard, which went: "Hello cat." "Miaow." "Are you saying 'Help me'?" "Miaow, miaow." "What sort of help do you want?" "Miaow." I think this tips the balance in its favour, actually. Alan Freeman makes the award.

BEST SINGLE DOCUMENTARY

Channel 4's *Banned* season came up with some good stuff: *Damned in the USA*, *Children of Chernobyl*. However, my nominations are: *35 Up* (Granada), *Age 7 in the USSR* (Granada), *Homeland* (Channel 4), *The Leader, His Driver and the Driver's Wife* (Channel 4). *Homeland* was Yurii Podnieks's moving tribute to the Baltic states; *35 Up* was the latest in Michael Apted's famous series of programmes tracing the lives of people first introduced to us as seven-year-olds; and *Age 7 in the USSR* was a staggeringly optimistic attempt to launch a similar case-study in the now-defunct Soviet Union. My winner, though, is Nick Broomfield's *The Leader, His Driver and the Driver's Wife*, which was shown in the *True Stories* slot last April. Ostensibly a quite benign story of a virtually wasted trip to South Africa — to

interview the elusive Eugene Terre-Blanche, leader of the paramilitary right-wing AWB — it took us right inside the culture of racism, through the friendly hospitality of the leader's driver (and the driver's wife). "You should spend more time in South Africa," says the driver to Nick Broomfield. "I could teach you your skin is the uniform of God". And he seemed such a nice man.

This ought to get you in fighting mood for tomorrow night. I feel, "What about *Inspector Morse*?" I hear you cry. "Where is *Mr Bean* in this paltry list?" I know. Life is terribly unfair. It's dreadful. And just think: tomorrow night could be worse.

Meanwhile, I vacuum up the glitter and collect the balloons, and feel unaccountably pleased when I notice there are enough jellies left over to keep me in lunches for a fortnight. I unplug the arc lights and the temperature in the room sinks back to normal, with an audible hiss. Phew. There was a nasty moment earlier when I thought the cats might spontaneously combust.

I hum "The Party's Over", shoving the rusty sarong back into the airing cupboard with the tea-towels. "It's time to call it a day." With the aid of wire wool and a squirt of Jif, I remove my thick industrial make-up and ponder the excitement of the day's events. I also wonder, in a vague sort of way, whether perhaps it would have been politic to invite some of those nice people from *The Times*. It's too late now.

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Jonathan Meades finds down-home cooking on an up-town green and Frances Bissell invites you to try some Flanders fare



Clive Graham-Ranger meets the Prince of Wales's flyfishing tutor, and Paul Heiney offers farmers some advice



Hilary Finch takes you on a whistle-stop tour of this year's arts festivals, including Kiri Te Kanawa at Expo '92 in Seville

Nothing here to laugh about

PREVIEW



Peter Barnard searches in vain for some comedy classics and finds only a titter where once there was laughter in every line

For some weeks past you could hardly turn on a television set without seeing a plug for this week's opening of the spring's Great Event. It seemed to be trailed after almost every programme and the tone of the trails suggested that the viewers would be somehow failing in our duty if we did not tune in and take notice. I rather resent this kind of importuning, but in the end, of course, we surrender and switch on.

Yes, Carla Lane is back. The Liverpool writing icon, comedy's Bleasdale, has, over the past 20 years, been a seriously precious stone in a mostly indifferent setting. From *The Liver Birds* to *Bread*, she has carried the flame for crafted writing. She has taught by example the abiding truth of successful comedy, which is that wit comes from human experience expressed in a certain way. "Jokes" are no substitute.

Early Lane was about young relationships, middle-aged Lane is about middle-aged relationships. This is a crowded field on television and *Screaming*, the second part of which is on BBC1 at 9.05pm tomorrow, has competition — some of it strong — all over the schedules. So perhaps this will not be one of Lane's greatest hits in audience measurement terms, but it deserves to be.

Three women of a certain age move into a house together. One is separated and a touch cynical about the benchmarks of life ("a husband, a house, Tesco's, a desertion"), one is a spinster, and the third's husband has died young. This would have so what potential. But Lane weaves a web of several layers. The dead husband is, in fact, a rationalisation (fled not dead) so by now we have two abandoned wives and a spinster, who at first appears to be in the classic mould, having "parts that have been seriously under-used".

This is in contrast to the blonde now favoured by one of the fled husbands: this blonde having a sign on her navel reading "end of restricted zone". But there is another, more substantial layer than this for in flashback we discover that the spinster's parts have been less under-used than was mooted: she has had an affair with Ralph, fled husband number two, which is not the end of it: all three women, and this is the

REVIEW

emotional epicentre, have loved Ralph.

Ralph never appears in any substantive way, only in the briefest of intercoual flashbacks, which could have been borrowed from *The Old Devils* to cut costs, mercifully minus the elderly grunting of the Amis adaptation in which sex appears to take place under close medical supervision.

The tense co-existence of three women under one roof raises obvious comparisons with *The Golden Girls*, but that is American and this is very British; that is a series and this is a serial; that is probably funnier, but nothing like as witty.

Not that depth is all or even most of the game in television comedy. *KYTV* (Tuesday, BBC2, 8.30pm) began unpromisingly as a spoof on satellite television. I say unpromisingly because if you have satellite television you do not wish to be sent up and if you do not have it, send-ups lose their point. So *KYTV* has become more of a spoof on certain television strands: this week a good-in-parts "tellython", after Comic Relief and featuring "brown nose day".

The show is carried by Angus Deayton (pronounced Deaton), who is currently flavour of the month. His principal vehicle, the satirical quiz *Have I Got News For You*, was the triumph of the winter schedules and returns for a special one-off after, er, um, April 9. I cannot imagine the reason for this delay: *Have I Got News For You* was always scrupulously balanced in its unfairness.

KYTV's "tellython" had one serious weakness, which was that at times it appeared to be no more than a tellython: a silly girl trying to interview sponsored marathon runners and being knocked down by them, technical cock-ups and the rest. But there were funny moments, such as all the celebrity switchboard operators deciding to go out to lunch at the same time.

At one stage, Deayton's whirling electronic board showed the programme had raised as much as 7p, but this soon returned to zero when the operators came back from lunch and a caller asked for his 7p back.

Deayton and Geoffrey Perkins write the show as well as starring



Brown nose day: Geoffrey Perkins and Angus Deayton, who write and co-star in the send-up *KYTV* on BBC2, Tuesdays at 8.30pm

in it, and Helen Atkinson Wood is the other main on-screen asset. She has niche-marketed a particular type of doxy female with tremendous success, sufficient I would think to make Germaine Greer spit.

The trouble with spoofing air-headed females is that for every prejudice ridiculed another is reinforced, but perhaps even on BBC2 comedy archetypes are better taken at face value than treated to *Late Show*-style analysis. They are, after all, only joking.

Is *Northern Exposure* (Monday, Channel 4, 10pm) only joking? Even the Channel 4 press release cannot decide "not quite drama, not exactly a comedy... a weekly hour of easy-going, occasionally even surreal, genial whimsy that blows in from Alaska".

Yes, repeat no. The programme is reportedly settled in the top 20 American ratings and Channel 4

has a good track record in raiding that territory, as well as the lower reaches of the US schedules: *Cheers*, *Hill Street Blues*, *St Elmo* and the aforementioned *Golden Girls*. If *Northern Exposure* is to reach those heights it will have to survive a slow-burn opening, in which the young, brash New Yorker funded through medical school by the state of Alaska has to pay his dues by starting to practise in that remote territory.

He is sent to a hick town and thoroughly detests it, but, of course, the natives prove to be less unfriendly than is apparent at first sight, when most of them appear to consist of beards, which only stop when confronted with paunches. The men are fairly unpromising too.

Young Doc Fleischman is played by Rob Morrow, who sounds aggressively bearded but

looks as if he has yet to start shaving. In fact, for the first ten minutes I thought he was going into medical school, not coming out. But yes, this is not exactly comedy, not exactly drama, and shame on those at Channel 4 who want us to think it is something like *Twin Peaks*.

Nothing like *Twin Peaks* is what it is, but if you can set aside the stereotypical New York Jewish boy, the stereotypical Alaskan backwoods town and the stereotypical young beauty who turns out to be a sophisticated businesswoman who flies her own plane for a living... accept all that and *Northern Exposure* could build a following among cultists.

Which is what Channel 4 is for, isn't it?

Cults, especially in comedy, can often be short-lived, but Jack Dee already shows signs of being a stand-up comic who could stand

up to further exposure. *The Jack Dee Show* (Channel 4, Wednesday, 10.30pm) offers a welcome change from the right-on comedy of Ben Elton et al. Dee is right-off: present him with a child wearing a badge that says "you smoke, I choke" and Dee knows just what to do: "I started smoking again, I thought, I'll go for that, that's a good deal."

Ostensibly Dee's is a show plus guests and although this week's rare glimpse of Georgie Fame was by no means the worst possible musical interlude, such conventions are tired and formulaic, especially when talented musicians such as Fame are wheeled on to perform ancient hits.

If Dee is good enough, and I think he is, give him a straight half-hour at the microphone. Good comics need no frills, but weeks like this can sure do with some good comics.

● **Screen Two: The Law Lord** (BBC 2, Sunday, 9.55pm)
The BBC's edginess in the face of accusations of political bias appears not to have infected the drama department (and rightly so), therefore the latest in a generally excellent *Screen Two* series goes out tomorrow. Written by John Cooper (who is a barrister), the story concerns a new government taking power with a greatly reduced majority (oh, surely not), in which an ambitious young home secretary (unheard of) appoints a Lord Chancellor (not called Mackay) to rein in the legal profession without consulting Parliament. Er... fiction. The play stars Anthony Andrews and Bernard Hill.

● **Wildlife on One: Pandas Aren't Always Cuddly** (BBC 1, Monday, 8.30pm)
There cannot be a department in all of television's many houses as consistently brilliant as the BBC's natural history unit. Monday's programme is a film that could change the cuddly image of the panda for good, containing as it does what is said to be the first proof that pandas eat meat. In this case a leg of deer. The film was shot by Marianne Wilding in the Sichuan province of China, some of it at 8,000 feet and amid breathtaking landscape. The narrator is David Attenborough.

● **40 Minutes: Farewell, Feb 208** (BBC 2, Tuesday, 9.50pm)
For people of a certain age, Radio Luxembourg represents a significant, if retrospectively silly, time of rebellion: a radio station more heard under the bedclothes than outside the bedroom. The station introduced rock 'n' roll to a generation and trained disc jockeys who became household names: Kid Jensen, Tony Blackburn, Pete Murray et al. The station became a dinosaur on an over-populated landscape, and most of those tonight mourning its passing into the satellite-only world probably cannot recall the last time they tuned in. At least *40 Minutes* gives it a deservedly decent send-off.

● **Trading Places** (ITV, Friday, 8pm)
Daft ideas are forgivable in a good cause, and can be fun. Cilla Black introduces a look back at a day on which people around the country traded jobs with celebrities to raise money for breast cancer research. The outcome is surprisingly entertaining, in a Friday night sort of a way. The highlights include Joanna Lumley sweeping the streets and Hale and Pace training with the England rugby team, who would probably have preferred Lumley. I doubt very much that she was complaining, however. P.B.

Join the magic mystery tour

Illusion and comedy combine this week when *The Magic Comedy Strip* starts a six-week run on ITV

Perhaps because television is itself a box of tricks, magic has never really been at home in the medium. It is difficult enough for a magician to overcome the scepticism of his audience without the potential for special effects and trick photography.

David Nixon, the grandfather of on-screen sorcery, solved the problem by embracing it. Today it is quite obvious that his stunts depended on camera work rather than sleight-of-hand.

John Fisher is an old hand at combining bamboozlement with broadcasting. He is the man responsible for introducing Ronn Lucas and Paul Daniels to television. His latest production, *The Magic Comedy Strip*, begins a six-week run on ITV this Monday. So what is the trick of successful spellbinding?

"The most important thing is to keep trust with the audience," Fisher says. "With TV anything is possible. But you must always try to convey the bafflement of a live performance. Magic does not work by itself. It is a mystery, a puzzle to be worked out through the interaction of the magician and the audience."

Man has been duping his fellow men for centuries and the basic appeal of seeing it done has not changed. This may explain why so much magic seems old-fashioned.



Tricksters: the line-up, from left, is Jeff Hobson, Rudy Coby and David Williamson

"There are only about eight fundamental tricks that a magician can perform," Fisher says. "He can make something vanish or appear, make something change position, or pass something through something else."

"There is impossible communication — mind reading — and impossible actions: being in two places at once and so on. It is not so much what trick you do as the way you do it. Cleo Laine and Annie Lennox could sing the same song, but each time it would be a different experience."

The three resident wizards of *The Magic Comedy Strip* are Jeff Hobson, David Williamson and Rudy Coby. They are being billed as the new wave of TV magicians. Fisher describes Hobson as "Julian Clary doing magic". On the evidence of the pilot show there seems to be little

new in his act, which involves transferring eggs from one bag to another, stealing wristwatches and humiliating the audience. His camp humour may alienate the politically correct viewer, but there is no doubt that his legerdemain is sound.

"He's the nearest thing to an American Paul Daniels," Fisher says. "He's not new, but he's young and he's got an extremely sharp mind."

"The magic is really a pretext," says Williamson, who comes from the American school of improvisation. "I try to create situations that have never been created before. I aim to take risks and burst through the fourth wall."

One of his props is a hand-puppet called Rocky the Raccoon, which he manipulates with astonishing agility. "It's a stupid stuffed animal, but if the audience laughs then they

will follow me on to the wildest shores. I like people to scream when I scream."

"I'd go to the ends of the earth to find a trick that will mystify," Rudy Coby, who is also from the US, says.

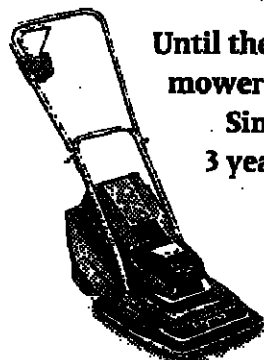
"He has more ideas than anyone I know," Fisher says. Coby's character is called Lab Man, an incredible hulk in a white coat and dark glasses, who can sprout an extra pair of legs.

Coby finds inspiration in Warner Brothers' cartoons and Marvel comics, designing every trick on paper first. "If it works on the page, I'll make it work on the stage." His fondness for robotics has introduced him to the Pinewood technicians who brought *The Terminator* to life. The only thing his act does not feature is a white rabbit.

MARK SANDERSON

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ST MATTHEW PASSION
(complete, sung in English)
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Evangelist: ROBERT TEAR
Christus: WILLARD WHITE
Soprano: MARGARET MARSHALL
Soprano: JOAN RODGERS
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TOMORROW at 7.30 pm
TCHAIKOVSKY GALA NIGHT
Romeo & Juliet Fantasy Op. • Piano Conc. No. 1
Swan Lake Suite • Sleeping Beauty Waltz
1812 Overture (with cannon & mortar effects)
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FRASER GOULDING conductor
MALCOLM BIRNS piano
BAND OF THE LIFE GUARDS
£8.50, £12.50, £16.50, £18.50, £21

SUNDAY 12 APRIL at 7.30 pm
GOLDEN GERSHWIN
Strike up the Band
An American in Paris
Rhapsody in Blue
Variations on "I Got Rhythm"
Porgy & Bess Symphonic Picture
LONDON CONCERT ORCHESTRA
HARRY RABINOWITZ cond. PHILIP FOWKE piano
£8.50, £12.50, £16.50, £18.50, £21

SUNDAY 19 APRIL at 7.30 pm
THE GLORY OF EASTER
Handel: Arrival of the Queen of Sheba; The Bright Seraphim (Soprano); I know that My Redeemer Liveth (Messiah); Water Music Suite; Bach: Sinfonia (Easter Overture); Suite No. 1 in C; Sleepers Awake (excerpts); MOZART: Allotria (from Excelsior); ALBINONI: Adagio; FRANCK: Panis Angelicus; CLARKE: Trumpet Voluntary; PURCELL: Trumpet Tune and Air; PACHELBEL: Canon; GOUNOD: Ave Maria; BIZET: Marche de L'ONCE CONCERT ORCHESTRA PHILIP SIMON cond. CRISPIN STEELE-PERKINS trumpet. ERIAN DAVIES soprano
£7.50, £10.50, £13.50, £16.50, £18.50

FRIDAY 24 APRIL at 8 pm
OPERA GALA NIGHT
An Introduction to Opera
MOZART: Overture, Non più Andrai (Marriage of Figaro); The Priests Chorus (The Magic Flute); I uoi leonori, La ci darem (Don Giovanni); RIZZI: Duet (The Pearl Fishers); Toradon's Song & Habanera (Carmen)
PUCCINI: One Fine Day (Madame Butterfly); Your tiny hand is frozen (La Bohème)
VERDI: Brindisi (La Traviata); Caro Name & Questa o Quella (Rigoletto); Grand March (Aida)
LONDON CONCERT ORCHESTRA & CHORUS
PAUL WYNNE GRIFITHS conductor
ANN HEATH WELSH sop. JUTTA WINKLER mezzo
ANTHONY MELZ tenor WILLIAM DAVIES b. tenor
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SUNDAY 5 APRIL at 7.30 pm
BAROQUE MASTERPIECES
Handel: Music for the Royal Fireworks
PACHELBEL Canon • ALBINONI Adagio
VIVALDI: Concerto for two trumpets
MOZART: Piano Conc. No. 23 K488; Sym. No. 40
MOZART FESTIVAL ORCHESTRA
PHILIP SIMON cond. LUCY PARHAM pno
CRISPIN STEELE-PERKINS & MICHAEL TIPS
£8.50, £12.50, £16.50, £18.50, £21

SATURDAY 18 APRIL at 7.30 pm
PUCCINI GALA NIGHT
Love Duet, Humming Chorus, One Fine Day (Madame Butterfly); Intermezzo (Manon Lescaut); O Mio Babbino Caro (Gianni Schicchi); Che gelida manina (La Fanciulla del West); Minuetto & Waltz Song, Che Gelida Manina, Si mi chiamano Mimì, O Soave Fanciulla (La Bohème); Reconda Amore, Vieni d'Arise, E L'acore Le Stelle (Tosca); Signor, signora, in questa reggia, Tu che di gel sei stato, Nessun Dorma (Turandot)
LONDON CONCERT ORCH. PAUL WYNNE GRIFITHS cond. MAURICE STORACH & ARNE WATSON sopranos ADRIAN MARTIN & BONAVENTURA BOTTONE tenors LONDON CHORALE
£8.50, £12.50, £16.50, £18.50, £21

SUNDAY 19 APRIL at 7.30 pm
THE FOUR SEASONS
Handel: Arrival of the Queen of Sheba
MOZART: Eine kleine Nachtmusik
MOZART: Piano Concerto in C, K467
VIVALDI: The Four Seasons
ENGLISH CHAMBER ORCHESTRA
IAN WATSON conductor
JOSE-LUIS GARCIA vln. SARAH BRIGGS pno
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TUESDAY 24 MARCH at 7.45pm
Verdi: Overture to La Forza del Destino
Rachmaninov: Piano Concerto No. 2
Beethoven: Symphony No. 7
ANDREW LITTON conductor
DMITRI AXELKEV soloist

MONDAY 6 APRIL at 7.45pm
NBC International Series
Bartok: Overture to The Music of the Dances
Debussy: The Walk to the Paradise Garden
Cello Concerto
Vaughan Williams: "London" Symphony No. 2
VERNON HANDLEY conductor
RAPHAEL WALLFISCH soloist

SATURDAY 28 MARCH at 7.45pm
ELGAR
DREAM OF GERONTIUS
RICHARD ARMSTRONG conductor
LINDA FINNIE, KEITH LEWIS, ROBERT LLOYD
HUDDERSFIELD CHORAL SOCIETY
Please note change of conductor

SATURDAY 18 APRIL at 7.45pm
Tchaikovsky: Waltz & Polonaise
from Eugene Onegin
Rachmaninov: Overture to The Night of the Nightingale
Tchaikovsky: Manfred Symphony
KAZUHIRO KOZUMI conductor
CRISTINA ORTIZ soloist

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SUNDAY 22 MARCH 3.30pm
CHILDREN'S CONCERT
An Introduction to the Orchestra
AQUARIUS ENSEMBLE
Introduced and conducted by Nicholas Cleobury
Narrated by Richard Stilgoe
Parcell: arr. Maxwell Davies Fantasy and Two Passes
A.S. Bach: arr. Maxwell Davies Fantasy and Two Passes
De Falla: Dances from Love and the Magician
Walton: Movements from Façade
and featuring Ronald Dahl's Chindrella arranged by Rory Boyle
Adults £7.50 Children £5.00
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ALFRED BRENDL</

Benedict Nightingale reviews a George Bernard Shaw play directed by Trevor Nunn

Timely echoes from past

THEATRE

Heartbreak House
Theatre Royal, Haymarket

THE timing is nice. Breathless, pushy election posters are going up all over Britain, and inside the Haymarket a venerable voice from the past attacks the "ridiculous sham democracy" that threatens to wreck the ship of state. "The captain is in his bunk drinking boiled ditchwater, and the crew is gambling in the forecastle," it rumbles. "She will strike and sink and split. Do you think God's laws will be suspended in favour of England because you were born in it?"

Sound familiar? The voice belongs both to Paul Scofield, playing the baleful sage and revolutionary Shotover, and to Shaw, whose half-serious, half-satirical self-portrait Shotover is. Heartbreak House, which the designer William Dudley presents as the cream-streaked steel skeleton of an ancient steamer, is at once his quirky abode and an emblem of Britain itself: a land fecklessly ceded by its more cultured citizens to the philistines, autocrats and financial sharks. The time is the Great War or thereabouts; but there are moments in Trevor Nunn's production when Shaw's attack on our island smugness has resonance today.

For all the energy of Nunn's fine cast, Heartbreak House remains a rambling, dreamlike piece, all witty paradoxes, sharp chatter and ominous symbolism. Insofar as there is a plot at all, it involves Imogen Stubbs's lovelorn Ellie, who loses her romantic illusions, cynically decides to marry the wealthy financier, David Calder's insecurely swaggering Mangan, and then joins the guru Shotover in what meant to be a spiritual compact between youth and age, vitality and experience, hope and wisdom.

But the plot often splinters into spiritual argument on such themes as political chicanery, capital punishment and (a prime emphasis) the tendency of pretty Englishwomen morally and mentally to castrate capable Englishmen. It all ends with the characters being awoken from Shawian reverie by falling bombs and actually enjoying explosions that, in



Captain Shotover (Paul Scofield) with Ellie Dunn (Imogen Stubbs) in Heartbreak House

Nunn's revival, rock the stage and under the eardrums. The grim joke is that Heartbreak House, or Britain, has a death-wish.

Here, the ranks of the frivolous, charming and self-destructive are led by Daniel Massey, all dandified whistles and throbbing tenor vowels as the dashing Hector Hushabye, and Vanessa Redgrave as Hesione, the wife who has assiduously unmannered him. Hers is an especially strong performance: a loose-limbed gipsy queen in an improbable Afro hairdo with an implausibly long plait,

twirling and laughing with glee as she amiably destroys those unwary enough to venture into her force-field.

Overall, Nunn's production strikes me as more vivid than the revival at this address in 1983 or the one at the National in 1975. The encounters, for instance those between the peppy Stubbs and the predatory Redgrave, are more passionate. Even Hesione's sister Ariadne, meant to embody all that is snooty and conventional, is played by Felicity Kendal as a sentient, sexy woman long repressed by upper-crust mores. And then, of

course, there is Scofield. He grumpily bumbles about the stage sporting a wild white halo of hair, yet always seems more than a crank or eccentric. Listen to that dark, lugubrious voice, confiding his fear of age, senility, becoming "a fruit gone rotten".

There is something of Shaw the man. Listen to the prayer for the safety of Britain, not in my text, he booms out at the end of the half-ironic accompaniment of *Land of Hope and Glory*. Superficially spurious it may be; but there, surely, is Shaw the patriot, still with us at election-tide.

Ideal as an export

OPERA

Kullervo
Los Angeles Opera

this is the Finnish opera London should see.

Los Angeles may seem the most unlikely place to celebrate the 75th anniversary of Finnish independence with a new opera based on their national epic, the *Kalevala*. Aulis Sallinen had, after all, composed *Kullervo* for the opening of the new Finnish National Opera in Helsinki this year, but with the building still unfinished, the celebration found itself taking place far from home.

Audiences in Los Angeles have been well prepared by performances of Sibelius's *Kullervo* symphony and with a battery of pre-performance talks, initiating them into at least the first degrees of Finnish mythology. But all of this was hardly necessary. The nice paradox is that this, in many ways most deeply Finnish of all Sallinen's operas, is also the most universal. The social dimensions of its tale of the romantic anti-hero, cursed through life by a bad upbringing, goes straight to the heart of this century; the spiritual resonances of the *Kalevala*'s folk wisdom transcend any time, any place.

Sallinen's early operas *The Horseman* and *The Red Line* travelled, but remain essentially Finnish works. *The King goes forth to France* broke national barriers by being not only performed but also part-commissioned by the Royal Opera, Covent Garden. That work's 1987 performance showed it to be a "collective fable" which simply collected too much, verbally and musically, for its own good. Its musical eclecticism and its verbal surrealism have been replaced in *Kullervo* by a tough, spare musical language at one with its own libretto.

Kullervo's libretto is crafted by the composer himself, a strong, lithe construct, fusing the hypnotic rhythms of the *Kalevala* metre itself with the opening out of its human relationship inspired by Aleksis Kivi's 1864 *Kullervo* play. This is the Sallinen export opera par excellence:

The story is billed in Los Angeles as "an emotionally charged tale of arson, incest and murder". It tells of the orphaned survivor of a family feud who kills his scheming foster mother, sleeps with his sister and takes final vengeance on his parents' murderers before immolating himself. That, says the *Kalevala*, in one of its typical homely asides, is what comes from being "ill-rocked in the cradle". Nature or nurture, karma or culture, Oedipus or Achilles: the scene is ripe for any artist who picks it.

For Sallinen it has provided liberation for much that is at the heart of his own writing. He has never been a composer much given to musical development or contrapuntal tension. Here, his penchant for short, simple rhythmic and melodic motifs comes into its own in the primitive four-note figures and intervals which gnaw away inexorably. The obvious echoes of Greek tragedy also stimulate Sallinen to a dramatically shrewd range of narrative devices. This, in turn, spurs him to some of his finest choral and solo writing, both thrown into sharp relief by the skill of Kalle Holmberg's production.

As fearful onlookers whose

modern dress contrasts with the gleaming robes and back-wood rags of the principals, the chorus group and re-group to chart their haunting lines from the *Kalevala*. In a real coup de théâtre, Sallinen has a blind poet relate Kullervo's seduction of his own sister: his endless melody, poised between the idioms of ballad and jazz, is experienced by Kullervo as dream, by the audience as something almost super-sensible.

In between, in short scenes, come the human encounters of Kullervo's life: the violent murders but also, in the composer's words, the "three areas of warmth" which permeate an otherwise chill score. Deviating from the *Kalevala* itself, Sallinen introduces the character of Kimmo (the tenor Jorma Hynninen), Horatio to Kullervo's Hamlet, a sweet childhood friend, a symbol of the "new and better tribe" needed for humanity's future.

Just as Kimmo's piping flute music softens the harsh primitivism of the score, so clarinet, harp and vibraphone soften its light as Kullervo's guardian, the young and sensuous Smith's Wife (mezzo soprano Anna-Liisa Jakobsson), attempts to seduce Kullervo in singing of Janáčekian suppleness and power. It is the totally selfless love of Kullervo's mother (the dramatic soprano Eva-Liisa Saarinen), though, which draws from Sallinen his most richly lyrical writing.

Enclosed by the grey walls and brown doors of Mans Hedström's economic set, and lit by the cool overhead rays of Claude Naville's equally eloquent lighting, Finland's great baritone, Jorma Hynninen, as Kullervo, stands at the centre of the work. It is a role made for this archetype of the anguished suffering hero and, with Ulf Söderblom's incisive conducting of the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra, he has created a hard act to follow.



Jorma Hynninen sings the title role, Kullervo

HILARY FINCH

AT ABOUT 500 pages a book, Mervyn Peake's pair of novels, *Titus Groan* and *Gormenghast*, are so packed with Gothic goodies that only a fraction can survive the transfer from page to stage. Yet the flavour of this version by the David Glass Ensemble tastes true. Its central struggle between rebellion and inertia develops, as it should, into a matter of life and death.

Rae Smith's design does not attempt to create the rotting, labyrinthine interior

Condensed flavour

THEATRE

Gormenghast
BAC, Battersea

of Gormenghast's castle. The stage is black and, in the rear wall, seven door frames open on to a shadowy corridor. The main area of the stage serves as library, Swelter's kitchen, innumerable dusty passages, private rooms, garden, battlements and, finally, the floodwaters beneath which young Titus battles for his life with the vicious Steerpike.

Peake's characters fix themselves in the mind through verbal quirks, gross physical deformities (Swelter's terrible belly, Flay's creaking knee-joints) and violent encounters that result in further deformity or death. John Constable's adaptation presents enough of the colourful oaths to leaven the dense manoeuvring with

humour, and Glass's fertile directorial skill can delight with its wit while it telescopes long narrative episodes into vivid physical sequences.

When Paul Hamilton, excellent as the foul-tongued Master of Ritual and as the loyal servant Flay, descends to the kitchens, the other six cast members move the doors out of the set to create a network of corridors. When Richard Atten's deadly Steerpike, precise, even dainty in the fluid movement of his limbs, clambers out of

his cell to the castle heights, four actors manipulate poles to show the shifting geometry of his route.

Less successfully, Di Sherlock does not build Titus's mother, the cat-mad Countess, into a figure greater than the sum of her odd parts. Another weak area is the declaration of revolt by Titus (Peter Baillie) against the dead weight of ritual: "Mother, I want to be free." This is a whimper, not a battle-cry.

But in the context of the whole these lapses are of little account. What the Ensemble has managed to find, as well as a dramatic pulse, is that weird logic in Peake's vision, where extremes collide in a self-contained world that is like Kafka's castle, only a distorted version of our own world.

JEREMY KINGSTON

Dusting off the satin sheets

CONCERT

CBSO/Rattle
Symphony Hall,
Birmingham

THIS was not quite scratch-proof music-making: there were a few instrumental blotches and a couple of places where Simon Rattle's driving tempo slipped from under the orchestral skin, maybe because these were performances not caught at a summit but pushing towards next month's American tour. Even so: wow.

We began with Debussy's *Jeux*, full of springing tossed rhythms and marvellous complex colours, smoky and opalescent, where the unaided ear found it hard to

identify what combinations of instruments could possibly be making these sounds. A generation ago, when the score was being rediscovered by Boulez and others, nobody talked very much about how sexy it is. Under Rattle, though, its abstract virtues of transparency, lightness and

precision go along with the feel of satin sheets, the smell of an unmade bed.

That *Jeux* failed to make much mark in 1913, when it was new, is usually explained by the revelation just a fortnight later of another Diaghilev ballet: *The Rite of Spring*. Here we heard both works, and the danger was rather that together they would eclipse Elgar's *Faust*. But not a bit of it.

For one thing, the slip from Debussy to Elgar, like an airship grounding, was a shock and a lesson in itself. Also, *Faust* in this performance was in no way fuzzy. Rattle discovered in the piece a caustic intensity close to Mahler, particularly where the cellos take the lead, and drew out the double nature of the main theme: first proud and rolling, then a shadowed alter ego.

There was even a touch of Debussy's cakewalk when we reached Eastcheap, and some wind calls of maybe Stravinsky's antiquity from Shal-low's orchard. As never before, one realised how Elgar might have been capable of a Janáček-like self-transformation if he had gone on composing into the Twenties. It was a sensible innovation, too, to plot the course of the piece with clear projected captions.

Nobody needs that help in *The Rite of Spring*, which is not so much an illustration of sacrifice as a display. This performance had a close-grained exactness of sound and rhythm to tighten the fury of the big fast dances, and a great richness and sensuality in the slumbering preparations. The opening passage for reeds and pipes, led by an excellent solo bassoon, was specially good.

PAUL GRIFFITHS

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A taste of Britain in Belgium

My first taste of Belgium was at Au Pot Carré, near the Grand Place in Brussels: wood panelling, tiled floor, bright fluorescent lighting, nicotine-stained paintwork. This was an authentic work-day bar, something of a haven in the food Disneyland that lines the cobbled side streets leading away from the square: restaurants with vivid displays of pink crustacea and pearly molluscs, touts begging us to fill the empty chairs, and huge clouds of mussel-scented steam wafting through ventilators of indigenous restaurants to vie with the charred lamb smoke billowing through the windows of the Greek restaurants next door.

The taste was of kriel, the sharply fruity beer from the Lambik brewery. It was followed by gueuze, another beer with a similar sharp shock to the palate. An acquired taste, we decided, and with only 24 hours in Belgium we did not have time to acquire it. Back to some Stella Arois on draught, at half the price.

However, it did occur to me that these beers would be marvellous for cooking: rabbit in kriel and mussels in gueuze. And this was exactly what we saw on restaurant menus while on our way to dinner at La Maison du Cygne, where we had a plate of waterzooi, the traditional Flemish dish, which is a soothingly simple broth of vegetables and chicken.

Improbably, I had gone to Belgium to taste food from Britain. The organisation which promotes our food-stuffs had sponsored, jointly with the local gastronomic review, *Culinaire Ambiance*, a competition for women chefs to devise a menu using British ingredients.

To find this taste of Britain, we drove off through rural Belgium, across invisible borders, our hosts pointing out when we crossed from Flanders to Wallonia and back again. The hamlet and the restaurant, named Kokejane, lie among leek fields near Herne.

Solange de Brouwer's food



Frances Bissell, The Times cook, enjoys familiar fare in the unfamiliar surroundings of Flanders

is worth the journey. On paper, her menu looked unsurprising, not to say predictable:

Consommé à la langue et ris d'agneau
Saumon d'Ecosse aux Jonagold et citron vert
Filet de Scotch beef en papillote
Bavarois de blue Stilton cheese
Indulgent au sabayon de single malt Scotch whisky

In the eating, however, each course was a subtle blend of skilled techniques, simple presentation and direct, unfussy flavours. The stilton was the only ingredient whose flavour and texture she changed, by mixing it with cream and softening it to make it more appealing to the Belgian palate. Served with a few salad leaves, or on a round of hot toast, it makes an excellent cheese course.

For the soup, lamb's tongues and sweetbreads were blanched, poached, skinned and finely diced, and then added to lamb broth, in which diced carrot and celery were cooked. It was homely and delicious.

Served with apples and lime, the salmon dish was one of the best and most unusual I have tasted for some time. It sounds like a pretentious combination, and there are many who do not like the savoury-sweet marriage of fruit and meat and fish. I do, and this dish is a winner.

Mme de Brouwer gave me the recipe, which I reproduce here. She uses Jonagold apples which, although a dessert variety, are good cooks, with crisp, juicy, well-flavoured white flesh. I have also included the sauce recipe, which she served with an exceptionally elegant dessert of crisp tarts and creamy layers. Much use is made of malt whisky in her kitchen, in both sweet and savoury dishes.

es, and I thought this creamy sabayon would go well with a hot apple tart.

If you are cooking for a fairly large dinner party, I commend Mme de Brouwer's method of cooking Aberdeen Angus fillet. The whole fillet is seared all over, not marinated first, because the flavour of the meat is already very good, and then enclosed in a large papillote of baking parchment, together with a splash of madeira, some seasoning and sliced truffles, which I would treat as an optional extra. The meat is then put back in a very hot oven to finish cooking. The paper parcel browns and swells up from the steam, which is only released, together with the good smells, when the dish is brought to the table and the paper split open.

If you can get lamb's tongues and a pair of sweetbreads, blanch and poach them and then peel and dice and add to the soup for the last few minutes. Or make the soup with vegetables and lamb.

This recipe is based on the one we were served at Kokejane. The stock is best made the day before, so that it can be de-greased by chilling and removing the layer of fat.

Lamb and spring vegetable broth
(serves 4)
2lb/900g middle or scrag end of lamb, chopped
1 leek
2 celery stalks
1 carrot
1 small turnip
1 bay leaf
1 sprig of thyme or lemon thyme
6 peppercorns
a piece of lemon zest

Remove as much fat as possible from the meat and brown the pieces in a large, heavy saucepan. Scrub and peel the vegetables and add

some of the peelings to the pan, with the herbs, spices and lemon. Pour on about 4-5pt/2-2.5l of water. Bring to the boil, skim the surface, and simmer on the lowest heat, partially covered, for three to four hours.

Meanwhile finely dice the vegetables. Strain the stock, cool, and then chill it, and remove the layer of fat which will congeal on the surface. Put the stock back into a saucepan with the diced vegetables and cook until the vegetables are just tender, adding the tongue and sweetbreads, if using them, or a little diced cooked lamb. Season to taste and serve.

Wild Scotch salmon with English apples and lime
(serves 6)
6 escalopes of salmon (7oz/200g each)
3 crisp, firm dessert apples
6oz/170g unsalted butter
2oz/60g sugar
3tbsp dry white wine
2 or 3 limes
salt, pepper
flour

Rinse and dry the salmon escalopes and put to one side. Peel and thinly slice the apples. Thickly butter an ovenproof dish, or cast-iron frying pan, and put the apple slices in it, together with the sugar and white wine. Cook in a moderate oven at 180C/350F, gas mark 4 for ten minutes, and then remove from the oven, and keep the apples warm. To make the sauce, use most of the remaining butter at room temperature. Decant the apple cooking juices into a saucepan. Peel the zest from the limes and reserve it. Squeeze the fruit, and add 1pt/70ml of the juice to the pan. Let the liquid reduce slightly over a low heat. Gradually add most of the remaining butter, a little at a time, whisking it to thoroughly blend and emulsify the ingredients. Keep the butter sauce warm while you quickly cook the salmon. Lightly season the fillets, and dust with flour. Cook them in the remaining butter for about five minutes. Arrange the apple slices on heated plates, the salmon on top, and spoon over the sauce. Garnish with lime zest, cut into fine shreds.

Sabayon of single malt
(serves 4-6)
2tbsp caster sugar
3-4tbsp single malt whisky
4 free-range egg yolks

Put the sugar and whisky in a bowl set over a pan containing simmering water, without letting it touch the water. Stir in the egg yolks and then whisk until the mixture becomes pale, foamy and thick.

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The sabayon is done when a ribbon of it, trailed from the whisk across the mixture, holds its shape for five seconds. Serve immediately.

A less rich sauce is made by using two whole eggs, instead of four egg yolks. In either case, the eggs are barely cooked.

THIS is the stilton recipe from last year's winner of the Lady Chef competition in Holland, Ida van den Hurk; again, adapted to a palate that wants something less

powerful than stilton *au naturel*. It is easy to make and good as a starter or cheese course, served with salad.

Stilton moussé
(serves 4)
6oz/170g stilton
2½fl oz/70ml cream
1tbsp clear, mild honey
4 freshly made pancakes

Cream the stilton with a fork, or in a food processor, and blend in the cream and honey. Divide the mixture

among the pancakes and fold into parcels, or tie into bundles with chives. Serve cold, or heat through in the oven for 8-10 minutes.

Frances Bissell will be signing copies of her latest book, *The Real Meat Cookbook* (Chattr & Windus, £16.99) today from 11.30am to 2pm at Books for Cooks, Blenheim Crescent, London W11; on March 23 from 1-2pm in the book department, Army & Navy, London; on March 25 at 7pm in Waterstones, Bath; and on March 27 at 7pm in Waterstones, Hampstead, London NW3.

Taylor-made for quality

Jane MacQuitty applauds 300 years of great ports from a grand old house that has held on to its independence

Three hundred years of port wine tradition stand behind the great name of Taylor's. Taylor, Flaggate & Yeatman, to give this grand old port wine house its correct name, was founded in 1692 by Job Bearsley, one of the many English traders working in the north of Portugal exchanging British wool for local wine, when he shipped port for the first time.

Despite the name, Joseph Taylor did not join the firm until 1816. Morgan Yeatman arrived in 1839 and John Alexander Flaggate in 1836. The title Taylor, Flaggate & Yeatman, shortened to Taylor's, was first used in 1844.

When Alistair Robertson, Taylor's partner and owner, took over in 1967 he knew that unless the company started to make money fast, it would be sold, as so many others had been.

What saved Taylor's (and other port firms) was the invention and release in the 1970s by Mr Robertson of LBV, or Late Bottled Vintage, port. The 1970s drinker, unlike perhaps today's young foggies, could not be bothered with decanting vintage port off its crusty sediment, yet did not want to be seen knocking back the "claret", "ruby port" and "lemon". Taylor's solution was to give drinkers a superior, aged, ready-to-drink ruby style from a dated, single year with some "vintage character".

The clever LBV style was achieved by taking a single year's better ruby wines and ageing them for between four to six years in cask, compared to the two or three that standard ruby, made from a blend of several years' wines, usually gets. Thoroughly fining and filtering the wine



Great expectations: gathering grapes in Taylor's port vineyard in the hot, arid Douro

before bottling ensured that no hideous sediment lurked at the bottom of a glass of LBV. Taylor's name on the label plus that of a single "vintage" year and an easy, full fruity style that was ready for drinking straight from the shop shelf made LBV a tremendous sales success.

However, Taylor's tale is not all to do with skilful marketing techniques, but with greatness too. Taylor's has always aimed straight at top quality vintage port production. For well over a century Taylor's vintage ports have commanded a price and

a respect that other first class producers such as Graham's and Warre's have sometimes matched, but rarely beaten.

So keen was Taylor's to sign up the Douro's best as its own that in 1744 it bought a property, Salgueiral, close to Regua in the upper Douro. Other Douro quintas followed, including Quinta de Terra Feita and the magnificent Quinta de Vargellas in 1893, just 25 miles from the Spanish border. The wines of this extraordinary, hot, arid, scrub-like and once very inhospitable estate, without road or electricity, but with its

own tiny, single-gauge railway, are some of the most memorable in the Douro: dense, dark, powerful and with an unmistakable scent of violets.

Vargellas grapes, still trodden by foot just as they were in Job Bearsley's day, always provide the backbone of Taylor's vintage ports, and are equally capable of being bottled on their own as a single quinta port.

Defining the taste of Taylor's vintage port, outside of the Vargellas violet-scented power, is not easy. Taylor's is usually a massive, long-lived wine with heaps of structure, tannin, backbone and elegance too. Great Taylor's vintages such as '27, '77, '45 and even the '06 all have the staying power of well over 50 years of life.

Dick Yeatman, Alistair Robertson's uncle, used to urge his nephew to "always look for a bit of green, my boy" on assessing the best wines and vintages. What he meant by that was not, it seems, a herbaceous quality, nor even a hint of green in the colour, although very venerable Taylor vintages like the 1908 and 1863 do have this hue at their rims. I rather think that a sort of firm, tannic, youthful greenness was Yeatman's key to future greatness. Few of Taylor's vintage and Vargellas wines are without it.

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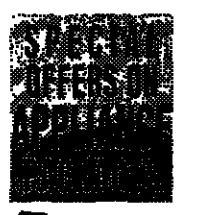
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Up-town meets down-home

The trick with acquiring fashionable rusticity is not to overdo it, says Jonathan Meades

Snows On The Green is an essay in the higher bistro idiom, a bit of a fashion item certainly, but most welcome since the fashion in question is for eater-friendly conservative dishes at low prices. The other current fashion, for over-the-top western cooking, is one that I find less appealing, although the east-west craze at least has the advantage of rootlessness and of affinities with nouvelle cuisine, which is still the only cuisine that most restaurant chefs appear to know — too many chefs are incapable of dissembling their unfamiliarity with the more robust food they're now called upon to provide.

The blip at Snows is caused not by the hangover of nouvelle cuisine but by, on the contrary, convert's zeal. Every so often there is an instance of imbalance where a dish leans so heavily towards its down-home origins that you imagine the kitchen is momentarily manned by some lusty domestic murderer from the remotest Auvergne.

At its worst Snows' cooking is *fade*, a word which has no English twin — it connotes a mix of insipidity and grossness. It's not really surprising that grossness figures here, for Mr Snow was previously sous-chef at 190 Queensgate, a restaurant which might have been devised by a soviet of cardiac surgeons in order to drum up trade — it serves what is unquestionably the richest cooking in London.

But it does season the food properly. The second of two meals I ate recently at Snows was notable for the constant timidity shown in this department. The place is popular, the menu is probably overlong, the kitchen is no doubt under pressure. The result is that potentially very good cooking is let down by inattention to detail. A potato "fritter" (a sort of latke) with snails and wild mushrooms was bland, hardly salted, and bereft of the gremolata (parsley/garlic/lemon peel mix) which would have given it a bit of lift. Cassoulet seemed to consist mainly of (quite good) sausage, beans and carrot — onion and garlic were missing, so was big flavour. Oxtail is served shredded, off the bone with a gluey potato purée — the answer is not to food-mix the



spud, for that breaks down the starch. Use the grater. Calf brain was done in the classic manner with black butter and with the non-classic addition of a spaghetti — non-classic and pointless. The black butter was too adulterated for dental comfort.

Now for the items which suggest that Snows is (or is capable of being) a few cuts above the average bistro. Salt cod brandade is done in the version that mixes the fish with mash — it is very good indeed, served with crostini and a pond of olive oil. (Each table here gets its own *fiasco* of extra virgin oil — which is right-on and incidentally, pleasing too.) Foie gras is served with a fried egg — one of several ideas that Mr Snow has borrowed from Pierre Koffmann's *Memories of Gascony*; it's undeniably rich, but there's not so much of it that you're likely to throw up. A charreuse of partridge was complicated and rather better than it may sound: the breast meat is served in a cabbage leaf with a *farce* of chopped cabbage and ricotta; the legs are served on another part of the plate with entire garlic cloves; also lurking in the depths of the cabbage is a slice of *zampone*. This is the over-egging element. It

also prompted me to wonder for a moment if the word *Spam* is derived from *zampone* — but of course it's not. Best end of lamb is served with an aubergine and mozzarella gratin. Haddock comes with spinach and a sauce which, though rich, seems positively penurious when compared to the majority of offerings.

There's an outstanding rice pudding with candied fruits in it, a curious chocolate cake which may or may not be made with polenta, and the cheese choice is Hobson's — Parmesan with rocket and (mashed) olive oil. The wine list is just a bit too curt, too butch. The outfit has its failings then. And it has a way to go before it can begin to match The Brackenbury, which is only 700 yards distant and which serves the same clientele. I guess. But Snows — the green is Brook Green — is so patently well intentioned, so obviously ungrabby, so clearly capable of one day making the pieces come together that I don't think it's a rash recommendation. The ground floor dining-room is a congenial space. I'm not so sure about the muralled basement with its *trompe l'oeil* door proclaiming

"loos" as a token of its U-ness. The staff are pleasant enough, though I must admit to a prejudice against pony-tailed waiters — they may be marvellous human beings but their floppy hair is capable of destroying my good humour. Those who ape horses risk becoming salami. Belgian proverb.

The French waiters at St Quentin have modest, stay-at-home hairdos. They look like amiable bank clerks in contented small towns. They are proficient to the degree of being genuinely apologetic over a wrong bill. This is a persistently smart restaurant — peach colour Jazz Modern mirrors with sketchy incisions, a long bar, a cashier in a demi-booth, banquettes. And it didn't get the way it is today by resting on its laurels. In order to keep up with fashion it has recently heaved-up its cooking or rusticated it, bucolicked it, whatever.

Turnip soup is splendidly flavoured, the absolute essence of that root, very creamy, not particularly delicate. A sweetbread *fauteuil* with a vinegary sauce was less successful — good thymus, but soggy pastry. Not so much heavy and rustic as simply heavy-handed. The sauce was billed as piquant: it is interesting to note

that the chef on BBC2's *Food and Drink* programme believes this word is pronounced pee-kwant. There is an odd dish of veal steak gratinated with oyster mushrooms and a sauce that includes septum-scraping horseradish. Then there's a rogue cassoulet brick red — not, apparently, from tomato, but from pimenton (I think). It otherwise included lamb on the bone, duck confit, *poitrine fumée*, and a sausage which struck me as having been too finely minced, too dense. Not a bad dish; far from a classic, though.

The puddings include a poor tartine fine aux pommes — too thick, insufficiently cooked, and sauced with sugary caramel. The current version of this establishment's long-running orange and chocolate sweet is, characteristically, heavy. The proportion of chocolate to orange is massively increased, balance has gone, and freshness with it. Sound all-French wine list.

Snows on the Green
166 Shepherd's Bush Road, London W12 (071-603 2142)
Lunch Sun to Fri, dinner Mon to Sat. £45 plus.
St Quentin
243 Brompton Road, London SW3 (071-589 8002)
Lunch and dinner every day. £60 plus.

JONATHAN MEADES'S RESTAURANT GUIDE

Marks — up to a maximum of ten — are awarded for cooking and although they are intended to reflect value for money they are not determined by this consideration alone. Certain very costly restaurants are very good, certain very cheap ones are, too. All prices given are approximate — they are for a three-course meal for two, including modest wine and an aperitif. Dishes are mentioned only as an indication of the repertoire. Never be afraid to complain. Phone first. It is not only courteous but illegal to dishonour bookings: that goes for restaurants as well as customers. J.M.

NOTABLE INTERIORS

The Market Bar
240a Portobello Road, London W11 (071-229 6472)

An impressive feat of opera design — boldly baroque, vaguely Hispanic, thoroughly unrestrained. There are fretted wood screens, candelabra with so much wax hanging from them they're like Old English sheepdogs, wrought metal chairs. It's among the most startling looking restaurants in London. The cooking is, in comparison, a bit timid but not displeasing — plaice with breadcrumb crust and duck confit salad are both all right. £53. Dinner Mon-Sat.

The Ivy
1 West Street, Cambridge Circus, London WC2 (071-836 4751)

In the middle of the century this was among London's most fashionable restaurants. Then it fell on hardish times. It has been rescued by the owners of Le Caprice who have refurbished it in a generically 1930s style which shuns pastiche. There are commissioned works by Hodgkin, Caulfield, Paolozzi etc. The atmosphere is sedate, almost staid, certainly restful. The menu nods towards old-fashioned London "continental" establishments, but the cooking is vastly more accomplished. The chips are superb, so are the grilled meats. There's fine pasta with oops, there's braised oxtail, there's smooth service. £50-£100. Lunch and dinner every day.

Scot's
20 Mount Street, London W1 (071-629 5248)
Piscine grub for loud pinstripes and glibbly tourists. The dining room is magnificent, the service is ancient

regime, the prices are outrageous. The cooking is a mixture of nursery, "continental", and the gastro nightmare called "good plain English". About £100. Lunch Mon-Sat, dinner every day.

Adlard's
79 Upper St Giles Street, Norwich (0603 633522)

A pretty restaurant in one of Norwich's many pretty streets. The interior is alarmingly green and hung with some good little paintings. The cooking is unlikely to astound with its fireworks but is diligent, considered, pleasing even if flavours tend to be slightly muted. Pastrywork is first rate, the cheeses are good, the wines are nearly all good ones. If the British quality of police reserve is one you admire then this is for you. £45 lunch, £72 dinner. Lunch Tues-Fri, dinner Tues-Sat.

Raoul's The Restaurant
30 Clifton Road, London W9 (071-236 2266)

Fashionably blitzed interior, unfashionably indifferent cooking. The kitchen can't trim meat, nor can it cook it accurately — this is quite a failing in a predominantly char-grill establishment. It also has a tendency to use strawberries as a "garish". The service is chaotic in an unwelcome way. £50 plus. Lunch and dinner every day.

Sophisticats
43 Chancery Street, London EC2 (0202 291019)

A sort of feline nightmare. The boudoir-like interior is thick with cat statues and cat plates and all-purpose canyery. The cooking is 1970s, but none the worse for that. Warm swoods, rather heavily sauced monkfish and duck, excellent soufflés. Eclectic selection of wines at fair prices. £55-60. Dinner Tues-Sat.

BASEMENTS

The City Brasserie
Plantation House, 9a Mincing Lane, London EC3 (071-220 7094)

Large basement beneath a mid-century block. Once owned by the late Peter Langan it still bears his hallmark of paintings everywhere. The cooking is better than the City mean but the kitchen suffers the problem of all its lunchers turning up at the same moment. This means it is more than usually reliant on pre-preparation, given which it attempts too many too ambitious dishes. Some of them come off, others don't. The habitual idiom is Franglais with a tendency to use oriental spices. £75 plus. Lunch Mon-Fri.

Masie's
43 Knightsbridge, London SW1 (071-225 2553)

Handsome basement oddity — a Chinese wine bar frequented by braying young pinstripes. The snack type dishes are better than those served as full meals. Stick to satay, deep fried aubergine, spring rolls, etc. The house champagne is acceptable. £45 plus. Lunch and dinner Mon-Sat.

Nakano
11 Beauchamp Place, London SW2 (071-581 3837)

Exquisite Japanese cooking in a pleasant enough basement. Part of the

repertoire's appeal is its unfamiliarity — bean curd with cod roe, cuttle fish with cod roe, bean curd with salmon entrails, dried sardine fry, sea cucumber etc. But equally the quality is beguiling. The constant counterpoint of subtlety and belligerence of flavour is remarkable. £80 plus. Lunch Tues-Sat, dinner Tues-Sun.

Boulesia
14 Henrietta Street, London WC2 (071-836 7061)

Grand and old-fashioned basement, made even more old-fashioned with a container load of naive paintings of dumb animals. The cooking has one idiom which is that of super-richness. Sweetbreads with a heavy meat sauce, extravagant sweets, good wines and mostly amiable service. A mecca for corporate diners and loud men with florid cheeks. £125 plus. Lunch Mon-Fri, dinner Mon-Sat.

Mulligans of Mayfair
13/14 Cork Street, London W1 (071-409 1370)

An Irish "theme" restaurant — but unlike most such gimmicked outfits it's not low rent. The cooking of Irish stew, the potato dishes such as boxty and colcannon, turnip and brown bread soup, and of boiled ham with parsley sauce is sound. Much of the menu is all purpose Franglais. The wines are reasonably priced. The basement restaurant is rather sombre. Lunch Mon to Fri. Dinner Mon to Sat. Brunch on Sun. £65.

KIND FOOD: ALISON JOHNSON

A taste for tofu

I CAUTIONED kind eaters last week against eating unlimited amounts of dairy food. But you may wonder what to substitute, particularly in dressings or sweets where you would normally use cream or yoghurt. One answer is to experiment with soybean products.

I prefer soy milk to cows' milk or cereals, as I like the unsweet "beany" taste. It performs well in sauces containing flour or cornflour, but curdles in hot drinks. There is a variety of packaged soy milk drinks and desserts available, mostly from health food shops. They are not particularly inspiring, but certainly no worse than tinned custard.

Tofu, or beancurd, the substance which is to soy milk what cheese is to dairy milk, is a surprisingly good substitute for dairy products in sweet dishes. Tofu has very little flavour, but it is a light and pleasant vehicle for strong flavours, such as chocolate, citrus or caramel. Use the "silken" variety for sweet dishes, to give a consistency much like a baked egg custard, without using eggs or dairy products.

Another advantage is that sweets made with tofu are low in calories for weight-watchers. When baked with the usual sweetening and flavouring agents at egg custard heat (140C) it firms up in a similar way. Tofu-based sweets are not subtle, but certainly not "yuk". Tofu

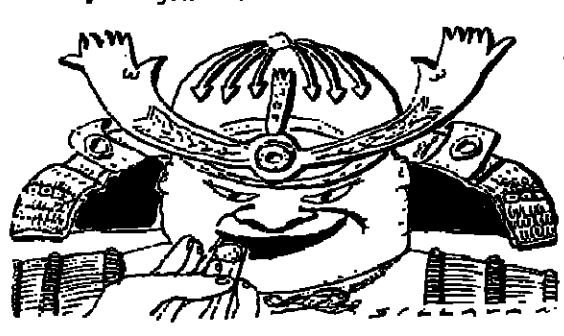
is an impeccably innocent vegan food; no animal product is required for its manufacture. But do not expect tofu consumption to make you meek and herbivorous. It is packed with nutritional punch: high protein, yet low fat and rich in linoleic acid and lecithin, which are beneficial in clearing cholesterol in the body.

Line and blackcurrant "cheesecake"
5oz/125g crushed digestive biscuits
2oz/50g melted margarine
8oz/400g silken tofu
2oz/50g demerara sugar
grated rind and juice of 1 large lime
2tsp agar-agar
6tbsp water

Topping
10oz/283g tin blackcurrants
½oz/15g cornflour
sugar to taste

Mix crumbs and margarine, press into loose-bottomed tin. Whisk or process tofu until smooth with sugar, juice and rind. Bring agar-agar to the boil in water. Whisk into tofu mixture, pour over crumbs. Allow to cool. Blend cornflour with juice of blackcurrants, boil until thickened and add fruit. Cool before spreading on tofu base.

• The recipe comes from *Cauldron Foods*, which makes tofu and a range of products containing it. For more information and recipes, send SAE to Cauldron Foods, 149 South Liberty Lane, Ashton Vale Trading Estate, Bristol BS3 2TL.



Invasion of the haute cuisine all-stars

Consultant chefs are all the rage in a number of our top hotels. But does their presence raise the standard of the food and service?

On Monday, Michel Lorain arrives at the Meridien hotel in Piccadilly, central London, to launch his new spring menu in the Oak Room. As the holder of three Michelin stars for the food at his restaurant, A la Côte St-Jacques, he is, theoretically at least, one of the top 18 chefs in France. He is also one of the growing number of elite chefs acting as consultants to British hotels.

The idea of using culinary celebrities — such as Paul Bocuse in Rio and Louis Outlier in Singapore — was pioneered internationally by the French-owned Meridien hotel group more than a decade ago.

But just what do these consultancies amount to? Are they, indeed, any more than figureheads in a costly, high-profile marketing exercise; or do they actually improve the quality of the food and service?

Ambitions vary from hotel to hotel. At the Meridien, where M Lorain has been the consultant for five years, the aim is to reproduce some of the dishes — like gazpacho of langoustines — available at A la Côte St-Jacques. To that end, a chef from the Meridien goes out to Joigny, in Burgundy, to practise M Lorain's recipes, a process that is perfected when M Lorain arrives in London.

"Quite a few of his dishes are completely recreated by us," says executive chef David Chambers, who also designs his own separate menu. "We have no trouble mirroring his dishes here."

If that boast is taken seriously, it means in theory that you should be able to eat a three-star meal for about half



Spring menu: Michel Lorain of the Meridien, Piccadilly

the price you would expect to pay in Burgundy.

The Oak Room, and Mr Chambers's cooking, has a Michelin star in its own right, but the genial M Lorain warns: "You have to be vigilant. They have to understand the personality of Michel Lorain in order to reproduce his dishes. The difference between my restaurant and the Meridien is that we achieve consistency so that clients can be certain the meal will be perfect. At the Meridien, it's not possible. That's excusable. It's not three-star Michelin. In Joigny, clients come to taste

the cooking of Michel Lorain. At the Meridien, they come to the hotel not especially for the restaurant, so they expect different things."

The collaboration between M Lorain and Mr Chambers has been a happy and, in the opinion of the critics, successful one. But the six-year involvement of Jean-André Charial with the Auberge de Provence restaurant at the St James's Court hotel has worked rather less smoothly. M Charial, who runs the Oustan de Baumanière, Les Baux, in Provence (recently demoted by Michelin from three to two stars), has an

even greater input at the Auberge de Provence than M Lorain has at the Meridien.

He flies over every few months or so to check on standards, supplies most of the restaurant's wine, is responsible for hiring management staff — and even supplies Baumanière crockery and linen, as well as re-creating dishes such as *gigot d'agneau en croustade*.

"I'm happy with the quality of the food — the nearest thing to my food outside France — but not with the activity of the restaurant," he says. Indeed, some critical indifference supports this ("the cooking is not incompetent" is as far as the *Good Food Guide* goes in its praise).

The reason is partly that there was a rapid turnover of staff until Olivier Massart was drafted in from Baumanière to take over as chef two years ago. To maintain standards, he now regularly hires staff from France. Another reason is that, with the best will in the world, some British produce — herbs and fish for instance — is simply not regularly up to the standard required to do justice to the subtleties of M Charial's cuisine.

M Charial has not added his name, or that of his famous restaurant, to the Auberge de Provence because, he says: "When you don't control every aspect of a restaurant, you can't put your name on it."

But Italian three-star chef Gualtiero Marchesi has had no such qualms at the Halkin hotel, which opened in Belgravia last year. He is even a partner in by the Halkin's owner, Christina Ong — a woman whose enthusiasm for Italian chic inspired the hotel's design.

"It's not a carbon copy," Nicholas Retie, the Halkin's general manager, says. "You can't simply lift a restaurant from its location and plunk it down in another. But the menu is his, the food is his, the staff are trained by him and our head chef is the star player from his Milan kitchen."

The Menu Milanese we serve is identical to what you would get in Milan."

Whether the whole effort is worthwhile is another matter (according to my colleague Jonathan Meades last week, it isn't). Albert Roux, a full-time consultant since his son took over in the kitchen of the three-star Gavroche a couple of years ago, is sceptical about how far consultant chefs should go in trying to reproduce their menus, let alone their restaurants.

"We are not McDonald's," says Mr Roux, a consultant at Hanbury Manor in Hertfordshire, as well as at numerous foreign hotels, such as the Grand in Amsterdam. "Cooking at this level is artistry, and what I try to do is only to make sure that the culinary art is of my school. But the chef has to have a creative input himself."

"It would be very boring otherwise and, may I tell you, places which try to reproduce menus fail lamentably. The consultant has to give a place a certain degree of excellence, and the only way to do that is by putting in skilled people and giving them the right spirit."

ANWER BATI

IF OUR JAMS HAVE A GOOD NAME IT'S BECAUSE OF THE FAMILY TREE



Take the Mulberry tree. It's been in the family for generations. In fact there are 12 of them, planted originally by Arthur Charles Wilkin in 1891.

As 'A.C.W.' never ceased saying, "The only way to make good jam is to use the best ingredients. And the only way to ensure that is to grow the tree yourself."

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Dress for Victory to win the nation's sympathy vote

FARMER'S DIARY: PAUL HEINEY

It is hardly my place to offer advice to farmers on public relations, but just as our sow Alice cannot be deflected by mere fencing, neither will I maintain my silence on what I believe may be a solution to at least one of the farming community's many problems.

The other night, watching a televised election report in which a candidate was attempting to inspire a meeting of local farmers, I could not drag my eyes away from the farmers themselves. I have never seen such a downcast huddle of dejected men. They slumped on tubular chairs with the posture of half-full sacks of potatoes: heads drooped in resignation, legs sprawled, hands stuffed in pockets.

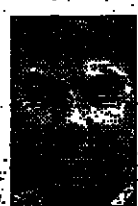
There was as much spark in them as in a rained-on box of matches. Had the poor candidate announced free beer for all, few of those drooping eyelids would have flickered.

I felt desperately sorry for them.

They were once champion heavyweights who fought the land every inch of the way, and won. Now they are punch-drunk, knocked senseless by successive political "whannettes" as agricultural policies became as unpredictable as the weather. But they know all that. It is why they sit as they do, in defeat.

What I have to offer is a cosmetic but bracing strategy with its roots in farming days long gone.

I had a postcard this week. It came in an envelope bearing a House of Commons seal, and it could well have been the most inspirational thing to emerge from the Palace of Westminster for months. It was a postcard of "Old Sheep" of Petworth, taken by the famous photographer George Garland in the 1920s. Now, it so happens that I own two books of



Garland's work, and so inspired was I by this picture of Old Sheep that I immediately became crystal clear what it was that these heroic farmers had, and modern farmers no longer possess. One of the books summed it up in its title: *The Men with Laughter in their Hearts*.

To skim through these pictures is to see a proud, unassuming man. Take Old Sheep. His eyes have a wisdom that pierces the centuries; his screwed lips grasp his pipe of tobacco yet are clearly poised to deliver words of insight to any prepared to listen. Anything he said, you would be bound to believe.

For all I know he may have been a miserable old sod who happened to be a good photographic subject, but the moral for modern farmers



is clear. If you want the world to love you, you are going to have to play the hero and look like one, too.

Old Sheep is dressed in a shepherd's smock, but even I am not going to advocate farmers start sewing squares of white linen together. But we could go back a

few decades, before denim and nylon ruled the land. Also in my collection is a slim volume called *Land at War*. It is the official history of British farming from 1939-1945, when farmers really were super-heroes.

Standing boldly opposite the title

page is a chap clenching two sheaves of oats in his muscular grasp. He is looking doggedly into the sun, his collarless shirt held by a stud, his corduroy trousers bravely held high by 3in-wide braces. Over the page, the farmer leans on his five-bar gate, pipe in mouth, with a distant, wise look. This time he wears a trilby hat, which shades his eyes. The cut of his waistcoat broadens his muscular shoulders. The caption reads "...with their love of the soil, their eye for animals, their capacity for hard work..."

Wow! Those old copywriters from the Ministry of Information could teach the Saatchi boys a thing or two. And if farmers could be seen that way again, who knows, image-conscious politicians might scramble to be seen lining up alongside them to bask in reflected glory, the way they do with heroic hostages, Children of Courage and TV comedians.

None of this revamping need be

expensive. For my part, I have an old, heavy blue overcoat, woolen and lined with silk and peppered with mouse holes. It drapes around me heroically. The buttons are gone, but a bit of binder twine will serve as a belt. Such a frugal, manly detail is what the public wants to see. Braces seem to be an essential, so does the striped, collarless shirt. The waistcoat is also vital, for it is a perfect match for the wide-brimmed hat. Farmers with a more humble opinion of themselves may prefer a flat cap. This will be fine, but remember, the wider the peak the greater the dignity. You don't want to end up looking like Mark Phillips, do you?

Cast aside the denim and the sweatshirt. Take up the woolen and the corduroy. Grip that pipe in your teeth. The war for the sympathy of the nation is a tough one: if the other night's television performance is anything to go by, defeat could come swiftly. Dress for Victory.

Feather report

At last a law for seabirds

With the dying breath of this Parliament a new bill was passed, leaving conservationists in a state of shock. With this as a precedent, the chances of a snowball in hell look really rather good. The Sea Fisheries (Wildlife Conservation) Bill got through against all the known odds.

Indeed, if the RSPB has a runner in the Grand National I shall put the mortgage on it, for it was the RSPB that put up the bill and which lobbied for it with such startling success.

Its contents will be familiar to readers of *Feather report*: last November this column spoke out in favour of the proposed legislation beneath the headline "Ban these cobwebs of death". The subject was a major anomaly in conservation legislation.

On land, planners, farmers, developers and road-builders have a legal obligation to consider the environmental

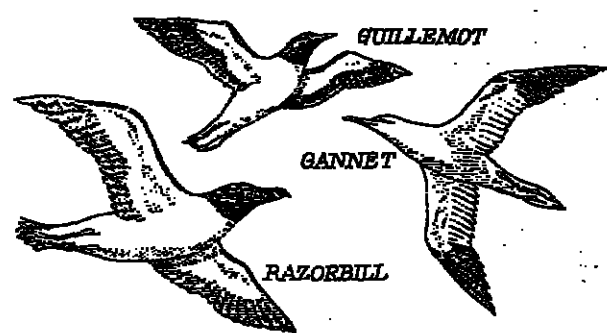
reason for the failure was the over-fishing of their preferred prey, the sand eel.

Last summer, fishing for sand eels was banned. The ban was instigated not to protect wildlife, but to protect the sand eel fisheries. All grist for the terms on this occasion and now sand eel fishermen must, by law, consider the tern colonies.

This new piece of legislation was proposed as a private member's bill and taken on by Philip Oppenheim, MP for Amber Valley in Derbyshire—about as far away from the sea as you can get. At least he had nothing to lose from irate fishermen constituents.

The speed with which the bill was whizzed through was baffling to those familiar with the normally Byzantine procedure. This quite extraordinary success is a tribute to sane and reasonable lobbying.

The bill had already been scrutinised by the Ministry of



impact of their schemes. On the sea, there was no legal requirement to protect wildlife. The only requirement was to protect fisheries.

There was certainly no need to worry about seabirds, who suffered horribly. Those marine masters, gulls, razorbills and puffins, are killed in terrifying numbers. Gulls regularly fish 200ft below the surface, and down there in the murk, they meet death by drowning in vast numbers when they get entangled in enormous, billowing, barely visible gill nets.

In Cornwall they keep finding dead dolphins on the beaches. As *The Times* reported this week, many believe the dolphins were caught in gill nets.

Fishermen who lay out such nets off the coast—these cobwebs of death—had previously no legal obligation to worry about the seabirds or the dolphins they kill. All they had to worry about was the health of the fishing stocks. Now this has changed.

In the Shetlands, there has been increasing concern about the decline of the vast tern colonies: in 1990, 30,000 pairs failed to raise a single chick. It is believed that the

Agriculture, Fisheries and Food. The whips in all main parties had been approached. A problem, not to say a legal anomaly, had been clearly identified and without a hint of fanaticism, the fishing industry, the civil servants and the politicians were persuaded that the bill was right and reasonable.

As it stands the bill does not save a single bird, of course. It simply provides the machinery by which birds can be saved. Unquestionably a tougher act would have been better news for gulls, razorbills and puffins. The only problem is that it probably wouldn't have been passed, certainly not at such breakneck speed.

The act has inserted the thin end of the wedge. The country now has a legal obligation to look after its terns, gulls, razorbills and puffins. The next step will be a test case: the theory has been established, now for the practice.

SIMON BARNES

What's about: Birds—much activity among resident birds: treecreepers singing and chasing. Twitchees—Pallies warbler at Bogor Regis, Sussex. Alpine swift seen over Southend, Essex. Details from *Birdline*, 0891 700222

Perfect match on the Test

Clive Graham-Ranger looks ahead to the start of the flyfishing season on a peerless river



Broadlands catch in 1978 for royalty and Bernard Aldrich

In April the River Test shimmers like a silver thread through Hampshire's sensuous, undulating downland. Flowing between manicured banks, the river is in pristine condition. It is the start of another flyfishing season for trout.

Standing by the Longbridge hut—a wartime Nissen hut at the river's edge—Bernard Aldrich surveys the scene with a look of contentment. It is a far cry from the Thames at Woolwich, southeast London, where he grew up.

Thirty-six years ago fate—in the form of a chance visit to his sister and a meeting with Broadlands' head keeper, Walter Geary—drew these disparate images together. Mr Aldrich is now the head river keeper on Lord Romsey's Broadlands estate, and has been the confidant of royalty, the mentor of the great and the good.

His privileged position, however, has been earned the hard way: wading chest deep in ice-cold water to clear the river bed of silt dunes that have built up through the winters, repairing bridges and banks as a chill north-easterly slices down the valley. The 50 or so fly-only anglers who fish the six miles of the Test that flows through the Broadlands estate are largely ignorant of the hard work that goes into preparing "their" river.

And in these days of winter drought, intensive farming and the need to replenish the river with fish, it is a tough life, far from the idyllic of hazy spring days and rising trout.

Over the years the river has changed in character. It is less of a classic chalkstream flushed and scoured of silt and

detritus by flooding from the winterbourne, replenished through the year by a constant flow from the underground aquifers in the chalk downs upstream, beyond Stockbridge. Mr Aldrich says the Test is now more of a settling river, rising and falling according to rainfall.

Intensive farming has meant a wider use of man-made fertilisers, which leach into the watercourse and stimulate the growth of unwanted blanket weed. In time this smothers other river weeds that are necessary not only for oxygenating the water, but also for the healthy growth of the many species of flies the trout feed on.

A keeper's life, Mr Aldrich says, is wholly governed by the seasons. Inevitably that means that when all sensible folk have retreated to their fire-sides, he's up to his armpits in muck and fish.

"Just as the mercury starts to slide down the thermometer," he says, "I'm in the hatchery grading fish—male and female—for colour and size. Like people, good parentage produces good offspring. The graded brood-stock is then separated from the other trout in the hatchery. In December we strip the eggs from the hens and fertilise them with milt from the cocks."

Raising a good head of trout, however, is not simply about giving nature a hand and then casting food on the waters of the hatchery. There is a constant threat of potentially lethal diseases wiping out years of careful husbandry.

In the late 1960s spawning salmon infected with UDN (ulcerative dermal necrosis) decimated trout stocks from



Time to reflect: Bernard Aldrich casting a fly to a rising trout on the estate's waters

Southampton Water to Leckford, 15 miles upstream. It was five years before the river was free of the plague. Keepers such as Mr Aldrich are all too aware of the Test's vulnerability to pollution, both natural and man-made.

In January Mr Aldrich and his under-keeper John Dennis don chest waders and start work on clearing silt from the river bed. Mechanical dredgers would create havoc among the over-wintering trout and spawning salmon, so it is a laborious, chilling task with

spade and hoe; 100 yards of river may require a week to create the channels that will be the conveyor belts of food for the lazy trout.

After a lifetime caring for the Test at Broadlands Mr Aldrich knows its every glide and pool, and lovingly describes the contours of the river bed, the way Wainwright brought every knoll and escarpment to life in his *Lake-land Guides*. An unattended river will change its course within a few years. February is the time for

repairing the damage and confining the restless waters to maintain its height and gentle flow.

"We use groynes—10ft steel plates—to shore up a crumbling bank. Nowadays we use a motorised pile driver, but in 1956 we had the 'Monk': a huge wooden structure like an old-fashioned oil drilling rig with a winch-operated metal weight on a rope. Once the weight was wound up to the top of the Mule, a lever on the side was then thrown and down came the weight to drive

the pile down a foot or so. "It was hard going and dangerous," Mr Aldrich says. Two fingers on his right hand were mangled by the Monk.

In March the first hatchery fish—2lb-plus, three-year-old brown trout—are introduced into the river to give them time to acclimatise before the first fishermen arrive in April. This is also a time for repairing bridges and fences and trimming away the dead bankside vegetation.

As March gives way to April Mr Aldrich turns his attention to the Longbridge hut. Overgrown with dog roses and honeysuckle the hut is modest, but a legend in fishing folklore. It is here that anglers gather at first light for a cup of strong tea poured from a ten-cup teapot and to listen to Mr Aldrich's quiet advice about where fish are laying and what flies they are feeding on.

It was here, back in the 1960s, that Mr Aldrich poured tea for the Queen Mother, who had brought her young grandson, Prince Charles, to be taught the art of fly fishing for salmon.

Mr Aldrich had met the young prince and his sister Anne on several previous occasions, one of which was particularly memorable. "One day Lord Mountbatten brought Prince Charles and Princess Anne down to the river. His lordship asked if there was a salmon he could show the children.

"I knew of one lying under High Bridge, a rickety cattle bridge near Lee Park Lodge. I duly set up a rod for his lordship and mounted a fresh prawn as bait.

"Before lowering the bait I explained to his lordship that if the salmon took off downstream, he should let it run. Down went the bait and as it got closer and closer to the fish, the children, who were lying next to me on the bridge, got quite excited.

"A few seconds later the bait passed by the salmon's nose, the fish's jaws opened and the prawn disappeared. I shouted to his lordship to strike, but there was no need because the fish was on and thrashing madly on the surface. I shouted again: 'Let it run', but it was too late. The hook came free.

"There was a disappointed silence for a moment, then Prince Charles turned to Lord Louis and said: 'My daddy wouldn't have lost that fish.'"

Next week: the Test is our Best of Britain subject.

Events

□ Bowes ramble: Guided eight-mile walk on the Pennine Way.

Bowes Village hall car park, near Barnard Castle, County Durham. Today 1pm-8pm. OAPs/child 40p.

□ Cambridgeshire shires: About 300 Shire horses compete in 12 classes, plus a farrier competition.

East of England Showground, Alwalton, Peterborough (0733 234451). Today, 8.30am-4.30pm. £6, concs £2.75.

□ Caronjy horse show: Eight-ring event featuring 40 championships, in aid of the Injured Jockey Fund and the Stoke Mandeville Spinal Unit. Priory Equestrian Centre, Frensham, near Farnham, Surrey (025125 4161). Today, 8.30am-6pm. Car £2-£5.

□ Herrington orienteering: Six courses from 1.5-6 kilometres.

Herrington Hill, near Sunderland, Tyne & Wear (091 268 5449). Tomorrow, 10.30am-12.30pm. £1.50.

□ Sowerby slalom: About 100 canoeists compete over 200 yards.

Landing stage, near County Bridge, Sowerby Bridge, W. Yorks. Today, 1pm; tomorrow, 9.30am. Free.

□ Wimpole gambol: Lambing weekend, including rare breeds such as Leicester Longwool, Soay and Jacob. Also Tamworth, Large Black and Middle White piglets.

Wimpole Hall, near Royston, Herts (0223 207257). Today and tomorrow, 10.30am-5pm. £3.40, child £1.50.

GARDENS TO VISIT

□ Cornwall: Penferrick Garden comprises 15 acres with camellias, magnolias, azaleas and rhododendrons, tree ferns and fine trees in valley.

Penferrick, 6m SW of Falmouth, between Bucock and Mawnan Smith. Tomorrow and Wed, 1.30-4.30pm. £1, child 50p.

□ Dorset: Langebride House is a redesigned rectory garden with fine beech trees, and spring bulbs, shrub border and yew hedges.

Long Bredy, halfway between Bridport and Dorchester. Tomorrow 2-5pm. £1, child free.

Rendezvous in St Petersburg

For the comfort of our passengers who have reserved places on the Volga river cruise, we have arranged a direct flight into St Petersburg and in doing so we have been obliged to contract more seats than we require. As a result we have decided to make a small number of seats available on each flight on a new programme that we have called "Rendezvous in St Petersburg". This series of visits represents a fraction of the normal cost and exceptional value for money.

The programme is based on a direct Boeing 737 flight from London Gatwick with a seven-night stay at the centrally situated (but confusingly named) Hotel Moscow, on bed and breakfast, with appropriate transfers to and from the airport.

These week-long journeys have been designed for the independently minded traveller who will wish to make their own programme of visits whilst taking advantage of the new openness and freedom to explore the many magnificent and interesting sights. In the Hotel Moscow local agents will be on hand to assist in making any or all travel, theatre and meal arrangements.

We must emphasise that there are only a few seats on each flight and therefore reservations can only be made by making a telephone option on the number given below, to be followed up by a completed coupon and deposit. With such exceptional value we expect demand for these places to be heavy, so we would advise you to telephone as quickly as possible to avoid disappointment.

The Hotel Moscow
The Moscow is a large, first-class hotel that has an excellent location on Alexander Nevsky Square. The square also houses the main working church of the city. The hotel is situated next to a metro station and two stops will take you to the very centre of the city. Facilities include restaurants, bars, a hard currency shop, bank and post office.



7 nights from £199.00

Optional Sightseeing

There are many wonderful sights in and around St Petersburg. A city tour will take in St Isaac's, the Admiralty, Smolny Convent, the canals and the magnificent waterfront. Other excursions include Peter and Paul Fortress, the famous Hermitage, and outside city visits to Petrodvorets and Lomonosov.

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May 24, 31, £245.00
June 7, 14, 21, 28, £225.00
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September 6, 13, 20, 27, £245.00
October 4, £235.00
October 11, £199.00
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Summer at the festivals of Europe

FRANKLIN MUSEUM



Waltzing in Vienna: May and June see the Vienna Festwochen, with Music Theatre London's radical staging of Rossini's *Cinderella*, and an Italian *Hamlet*. From July to September, the new Festival Vienna Klassik features Haydn

MARCH

□ **Budapest spring festival:** This marks the beginning of the Year of Baroque in central Europe. Opera includes Rossini's *Moses* and Shostakovich's *The Nose*. There is also folklore, dance and operetta, orchestral and chamber music concerts with visits from Les Musiciens du Louvre, Boris Berezovsky and the Moscow Early Music Academy.
March 14-29: POB 80, Vorosmarty ter 1, 1366 Budapest V (010 36 11 189570).
 Tour: JMB offers a range of tailor-made trips from £427.

APRIL

□ **Expo '92, Seville:** To celebrate the 500th anniversary of Columbus sailing from Andalusia to the New World, Seville has lined up a host of performers for what is billed as "the greatest fiesta the world has ever known". Plácido Domingo, José Carreras and Kiri Te Kanawa make appearances.
April 20-October 12: Edificio WTC, Expo '92, Isla de la Cartuja, S/N, 41092, Sevilla, (010 34 54 46 1993).
 Tour: Most travel firms are running trips to Expo. Travel for the Arts includes a week in Andalusia, tickets to the Carreras and Te Kanawa concerts, and a visit to Granada: £1,075 per person, June 24-July 1.



Berlin guest: Claudio Abbado

□ **Salzburg Easter festival:** In a lower, sweeter key than the summer jamboree, this opens with *Die Frau ohne Schatten*, conducted by Solti, and concerts include Schumann's *Requiem* for Mignon, and Lieder matinees by Olaf Baer and Anne-Sofie von Otter.
April 11-20: Kartenbüro der Osterfestspiele, Festspielhaus, A-5010 Salzburg (010 43 66 39045).
 Tour: Prospect offers a four-night trip from April 17 at £895. Travel for the Arts has a trip from April 10-15 at £905. Page and Moy offers a five-night trip from April 10, from £725.

□ **Printemps des Arts Monte Carlo:** A strong festival programme features Vivaldi's *pasticcio*, Montezuma, an 18th-century entertainment about the Aztec emperor, to be directed by Jean-Claude Malgoire. Concerts by Yuri Bashmet, Alfred Brendel, Katia Ricciarelli.
April 17-May 16: 4 rue des Iris, MC-98000 Monaco (010 33 93 255804).

□ **Lucerne Easter festival:** A more intimate venture than the mainstream summer festival. In local churches and art galleries, on Maundy Thursday, Philippe Herreweghe directs the Matthew Passion. Easter night liturgy with Andrew Parrott's Taverner Choir. Symphony concerts with the LSO in Holy Week.
April 16-21: Postfach, CH-6002 Luzern (010 41 41 235272).

□ **Schwetzingen Festspiele:** The tiny rococo theatre where Mozart played as a child is the venue for a summer-long festival, starting on April 24 with a concert of Hindemith and Rossini, and continuing with chamber music and Lieder recitals and operas, including *L'occasione fa il ladro*, *Desdemona und ihre Schwestern* and *Tancredi*.
April 26-June 14: Verkehrsverein Schwetzingen, 6830 Schwetzingen Schlossplatz (010 49 33 6202).

MAY

□ **Prague spring festival:** The city's reawakening is expressed in a Gala Festival Hoffnung Concert devoted to "The triumph of musical humour". There is also a programme of concerts and recitals in the restored theatres, churches and palaces of the Czech capital.
May 13-June 1: Hellichova 18, CS-11800 Prague 1 (010 42 25 30293).

Tours: Cadok offers tours departing May 15, 22, 29 from £379. Henebery goes from May 22-29 at £625. Travel for the Arts offers two tours, leaving May 13 and May 19 from £875, including excursions.

□ **Maggio musicale Fiorentino:** The Renaissance capital of Tuscany offers an unsurpassed set of backdrops for its annual spring festival. Opera highlights include Philip Glass's *The Fall of the House of Usher*, the world premiere of a Pasolini-based opera.

Teorema, and Jonathan Miller's production of *Figaro*.
May 4-June 27: Via Solferino 15, 50123 Florence (010 39 55 27791).

Tour: Page and Moy plans a trip.
 □ **Vienna Festwochen:** Spring in Vienna sees opera by Rossini (Music Theatre London's radical staging of *Cinderella*), a new Calderón production, an Italian *Hamlet*.
May 8-June 14: Wiener Festwochen, Leharstrasse 11, A-1060 Vienna (010 43 15 861678).

Tours: Henebery has a tour from May 31-June 6 at £485.
 □ **ISCM world music days, Poland:** A festival of contemporary music, taking place this year in Warsaw and Pultusk. British composers represented include Judith Weir, Gavin Bryars and Ian Wilson, with an outdoor performance of *Kanal 2* by Margaret Lucy Wilkins.
May 15-23: ISCM, British Section, c/o SPNM, West Heath Studios, 174 Mill Lane, NW6 1TB (071 431 3752).

□ **Drottningholm festival:** In the 18th-century court theatre on Lake Malaren, the orchestra plays in period costume and on period instruments. The festival includes Sallier's *Falstaff* and Gluck's *Orfeo ed Euridice*.
May 22-September 5: Box 27050, 10251 Stockholm (010 46 86 651400).

Tours: JMB has trips from £469. Travel for the Arts offers a six-day tour leaving on July 17.

JUNE

□ **Hohenems Schubertiade:** Devoted to Schubert, his Lieder and chamber music, this festival takes place in the palaces, churches and concert halls of Feldkirch, in the Vorarlberg. The focus is on the complete piano sonatas, played by András Schiff. Also, Brigitte Fassbaender (paintings and recitals), Margaret Price, Peter Schreier and Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau.
June 12-28: Schweizerstrasse 1, Postfach 100, A-6845 Hohenems (010 43 55 762091).

Tours: Henebery offers a tour from June 17-23, from £410. Martin Randall makes four trips, from £820, including art-historical lecture tours, excursions, concerts. Prospect offers six-night departures on June 12 and



Expansive Expo '92: Plácido Domingo will perform in Seville

18, from £850. JMB offers flexible times and prices in trips ranging from £269. Page and Moy offers five or seven-night trips, escorted or unescorted, from £955.

□ **Jyväskylä festival:** Finland's multi-arts event in which art meets science and politics. Focuses on the Baltic states and Russia, and also, with a nod to the Tolkien centenary, explores fantasy in art.
June 9-18: Kauppakatu 14A 4, SF-40100 Jyväskylä (010 35 84 1615624).

□ **Diverdimenti in Corfu:** This lively chamber music festival is in its second year. The New Fortress, the Palace of St Michael and St George, and the theatre host recitals and masterclasses by the Lindsay Quartet with Alexandre Brussilovsky among others.
June 3-14: Corfu Festival, c/o Chamber Music Holidays.

□ **Holland festival:** This focuses on the music of Luigi Nono. Also, a Russian and Baltic programme featuring new works by Gubaidulina. John Elliot Gardiner continues his Mozart cycle with *Così*, and Stockhausen's *Diebstahl aus Licht* receives its Dutch premiere.
June 1-30: Netherlands Reservations Centre, PO Box 404, NL-2260 AK Leidschendam, Netherlands (010 31 70 3202500).

□ **Roskilde festival:** Northern Europe's focus on blues, new wave, rock and folk music, with a programme of Danish theatre,

films and workshops.
June 25-28: Roskilde Festival, Maglegaardsvej, DK-4000 Roskilde.

□ **Umea festival of chamber music:** Twinned with Finland's Korsholm festival on the other side of the Gulf of Bothnia, they make up the Nordic Arts Festival of the Year, directed by Dmitri Sitkovetsky. When the music ends in Korsholm until June 28.

June 13-18: Kulturforvaltningen, Programmenheten, S-90178 Umea (010 46 90 163466).

□ **Zurich Junifestwochen:** With the Columbus anniversary in mind, Zurich focuses on all things Brazilian in a festival whose exhibitions and theatre run from May to August. June sees the main musical events, including Spanish and Brazilian early and contemporary music, afternoon guitar recitals, and programmes from the Zurich Chamber Orchestra.
May 29-July 6: Präsidiabteilung der Stadt Zurich, Junifestwochen, Postfach, 8022 Zurich.

□ **Spoleto festival dei due mondi:** Gian-Carlo Menotti's festival in the green heart of Umbria opens with Donizetti's opera *Il duca d'Alba*, sees visits from the Bolshoi ballet, and offers a stimulating programme of theatre, including Macchia's *Mademoiselle Molière* and Mastroianni's *Sunshine*.

June 24-July 12: Festival dei due mondi, Via Cesare Becaria 18, I-00196 Roma (010 39 63 210288).

JULY

□ **Festival international de Colmar:** In the Alsace home of Grünewald and Schweitzer, Vladimir Spivakov's festival pays homage to Vladimir Horowitz, with performances by the Moscow Virtuosi, Evgeni Kissin and Barry Douglas, and with five o'clock Russian tearoom concerts featuring Robert Holl, John Lill and, of course, Spivakov.
July 3-14: Festival International de Colmar, Office de Tourisme, 4 rue des Unterlinden, F-68000 Colmar (010 33 89 410229).

□ **Kuhmo chamber music festival:** All-night sauna parties and all-day music-making characterises Finland's special lakeside chamber music festival in the heart of Finnish Karelia country. Schubert and the Italian Baroque are the themes this year.
July 12-26: Torikatu 39, SF-88900 Kuhmo (010 35 88 6520936).

Tour: Page and Moy offers a package, travelling via Helsinki, at £945 for six nights, including excursions.

□ **Aix-en-Provence opera festival:** Summer in Cézanne's Provence means opera in the courtyard of the archbishops' palace and recitals in the oleander-scented cathedral cloister. This year Don Giovanni, a new production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *The Rake's Progress*.
July 13-31: Bureau du Festival, Place de l'Ancien Archevêché, F-13100 Aix (010 33 42 233781).

Tours: Henebery offers a trip from July 17-23 at £460. JMB offers trips from £370. Page and Moy plans a trip.

□ **Bruges early music festival:** One of Europe's most important such events has an exhibition of early keyboard instruments, music by Bach and his contemporaries, and tributes to Columbus and Lorenzo il Magnifico, who died in 1492.
July 25-August 8: Tourist Office, Burg 11, B-8000 Bruges (010 32 50 448686).

□ **Verona opera festival:** Verona's huge and hot Roman amphitheatre this year hosts *La Bohème*, *Don Carlos* and *Aida*.
July 1-August 31: Enite Arena, Piazza Bra 28, I-37121 Verona (010 39 45 596517).
 Tours: Henebery goes from July 21-27, staying at nearby Desenzano, from £753, and has a tour combining with

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Venice, from 1965. Martin Randall combines with Bregenz and Innsbruck on one guided tour, Aug 12-21 from £1,220. Prospect offers five different five-night tours from July 15 from £795. JMB offers a range of dates and prices for individual trips plus one special escorted tour July 16-19, at £899. Travel for the Arts goes from July 15-19 at £799, including excursions, and also combines in fly-drive with Pesaro at £850. Page and Moy offers five, six or seven-night tours from £529.

□ **Savonlinna opera festival:** In the courtyard of Olav's medieval castle, the country's premier opera festival offers a new production of *Porgy and Bess* this year from Opera Ebony USA, and familiar, epic stagings of *Aida*, *Fidelio* and *The Magic Flute*.
July 1-31: Olavinkatu 35, Savonlinna, SF-57130 (010 358 57 514700).

Tours: Page and Moy offers a seven-night trip via Helsinki, with excursions in both centres at £1,345.

□ **Macerata opera festival:** Set in



Seville date: Kiri Te Kanawa

the foothills of the Apennines, this open-air opera festival is gaining in recognition. This year offers *La traviata*, *La sonnambula*, *Figaro* and full programme of symphony concerts.

July 15-Aug 12: Arena Sferisferio, Piazza della liberta, Macerata (010 39 73 5230735).

Tours: JMB offers trips from £279. Page and Moy has a five-night trip departing July 23 at £770, including excursions. Lirica Travel takes in Macerata in a tour which also visits Rome, Lake Garda and Verona.

□ **Festival Wiener Klassik:** A new festival, exploiting Vienna's 18th and 19th-century palaces for programmes of chamber music by Haydn, Mozart and Rossini, as well as music from the Second Viennese School. This year's theme is Haydn in 1792.

July 17-Sept 19: Festival Wiener Klassik, Freidgasse 1, A-1130 Vienna (010 43 15 861676).

□ **Styrian Arts Festival:** The Styrian Arts Festival, one of Austria's most challenging, takes night as its theme, with nocturnes in castles, a performance of *The Fairy Queen* with Harmoncourt, and a *Walpurgisnacht* orchestral concert.

June 27-July 20: Palais Attems, Sackstrasse 17, A-8010 Graz (010 43 31 6812941).

□ **Munich opera festival:** In the exquisite Cuvillies Theatre, *Intermezzo* and a new production of *Der Prinz von Homburg*. Also *Carmen*, *Fidelio*, *Don Giovanni*, *Figaro*, and recitals with Editra Gruberova, Margaret Price, Felicity Lott and Ann Murray.

July 6-30: Münchner Opernfestspiele, Postfach 100148, D-8000 München (010 49 89 221316).

Tours: Prospect offers four nights from July 9, 16 and 28, from £525. JMB has a variety of dates and prices. Page and Moy offers four trips from £590.

□ **Vilnius time of music:** Finland's festival of the avant-garde includes courses in computer music and dance; this year's visiting composers are York Höller and Alvin Lucier.

July 8-15: Time of Music, SF-44500 Viitassari (010 35 84 623195).

□ **Bregenz festival:** Opera on the floating stage of the Bodensee, backed by the green hills of the Vorarlberg. This year *Carmen* returns, live bull, flamenco and all, and a new production of Berlioz's *Damnation de Faust* will open in the Festspielhaus.

July 21-Aug 23: Bregenzer Festspiele, Postfach 311, A-6901 Bregenz (010 43 55 744920).

Tours: Henebery goes from Aug 5-11 from £535. Martin Randall combines with Innsbruck and Verona and one guided tour, Aug 12-21 from £1,220. Prospect goes from Aug 1 for five nights, from £720, inc. excursions. JMB has trips. Page and Moy offers five and seven-night trips from £695.

□ **Bayreuth festival:** No new Ring this year. Harry Kupfer has his last showing, with *Tannhäuser* conducted by Donald Runnicles. *Dutchman* by Sinopoli and *Parsifal* by James Levine.

July 25-Aug 28: Karlenburo,

Postfach 100262, D-8580 Bayreuth (010 49 92 120221).

Tours: Henebery offers a trip from Aug 15-21 from £595.

□ **Vadstena Academy summer opera festival:** Operas, concerts and music courses in the historic setting of Vadstena's convent and castle, overlooking the waters of Lake Vanern. Two operas inspired by *The Tempest*: in the Old Theatre, *Prospero's Dream* to music by Purcell, and in the castle, *The Island of Spirits* by J.F. Reichardt, a contemporary of Mozart.

July 7-Aug 16: Vadstena-Akademien, Kungholmsgatan 56, S-11230 Stockholm (010 46 86 526180).

□ **Lockenhaus chamber music:** Gidon Kremer's festival in castle and church focuses on Schubert and Shostakovich, with the Cherubini, Brodsky, Hagen and Orlandi Quartets and baritone Robert Holl.

July 3-12: Kammermusikfest Lockenhaus, A-7442 Lockenhaus (010 43 26 162072).

□ **Montepulciano festival:** The Cantieri, founded by Hans Werner Henze, presents his comedy-ballet *Le Disperazioni di Pulcinella*, Paisiello's *Il re Teodoro in Venezia*, concerts of Turnage, Mozart, Nono and Brahms in the San Francesco, and of Purcell and Britten in the Tempio di San Biagio.

July 16-Aug 2: Cantieri Internazionale d'arte, Comune di Montepulciano, Via del Teatro 4, 53045 Montepulciano (010 39 57 8757089).

□ **Schleswig-Holstein festival:** From Flensburg to Lübeck, throughout the sea-ringed top of Germany, Justus Frantz's festival offers a non-stop summer of music, focusing on the Baltic republics and Scandinavia, with visits from Maria Joao Pires, Håkan Hardenberger, Jessye Norman, the Baltic Jazz Trio and the Riga Chamber Orchestra.

June 28-Aug 23: Schleswig-Holstein Festival, Holzdamm 40, D-2000 Hamburg 1 (010 49 40 24821150).

□ **Baginiano musica nel chiostro:** Adam Pollock's festival of opera rarities, performed in a convent cloister, offers the Peri/Oliver *Euridice* and a new production of Handel's *Orlando*.

July 24-Aug 9: Santa Croce, L-58041 Baginiano, Comune di Grosseto (010 39 56 438096).

□ **Gstaad Mezzanin festival:** This important Alpine festival sees visits from the Sinfonia Varsovia, a Schmittke evening, a concert performance of *La traviata* and concerts by the London Symphony Orchestra.

July 31-Sept 12: Postfach 334, Kirchstrasse, 3780 Gstaad (010 41 30 48865).



Italian opera setting: arches of the magnificent Verona Arena

AUGUST

□ **Stavanger chamber music and dance festival:** Lively event in Norway's small seaport, with a French/Russian theme. Performers include Cristina Ortiz, Taber Zimmermann and Michael Collins.

Aug 14-22: Stavanger Festival, c/o Stageway, Sandviga 24, 4007 Stavanger (010 47 45 31440).

□ **Tampere international theatre festival:** Finland's only festival of professional theatre in a town



Sights and sound of Salzburg: the Jedermann musicians bring colour to the Easter and summer festivals; Shakespeare, *Salome* and Messiaen are on the August bill

CH-6002 Lucerne (010 41 41 235272).

□ **Helsinki festival:** Under the banner of Mare Balticum, the Finnish capital hosts festival visits from the Lithuanian Chamber Orchestra, Mirella Freni, Nikolai Ghiaurov and Natalia Gutman. There is also a programme of open-air rock concerts, opera, dance, drama.

Aug 18-Sept 6: Unioninkatu 28, SF-00100 Helsinki (010 35 80 659688).

Tour: Page and Moy offers a seven-night trip, with excursions, at £1,089.

□ **Salzburg festival:** A new staging, by Peter Stein, of Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*, new productions of *La clemenza di Tito*, *Die Frau ohne Schatten* and *Salome*, and Messiaen's *Saint François d'Assise*.

July 26-Aug 30: Festival Offices, Postfach 140, A-5010 Salzburg (010 43 66 28045).

Tours: Henebery has a trip from Aug 22-29 from £550. JMB offers trips throughout the season, plus one special escorted tour from Aug 19-23 at £995.

Page and Moy offers five varied packages from £875-£1,195.

□ **Pesaro Rossini festival:** The Adriatic beach resort comes into its own this year with Rossini's bicentenary. The operas include *Semiramide*, *Viaggio a Reims* and *Le Cantele per i Borboni*.

Aug 1-15: Via Rossini 37, I-61100 Pesaro (010 39 72 1697360).

Tour: JMB makes arrangements throughout the month from £297-£559.

□ **Turku music festival:** Composer-pianist Olli Mustonen directs a broad-based festival which includes visits from Heinrich Schiff and Les Arts Florissants, and performances of Paavo Berglund's Sibelius series.

Aug 7-16: Festival Foundation, Uudenmaankatu 1,

SF-20500 Turku (010 35 82 1511162).

□ **Utrecht early music festival:** An intensive feast of early music, from mid-morning until midnight. In concerts, lectures, workshops, all in the churches, museums and historic houses. Special focus on music of the Iberian peninsula and on Guillaume de Machaut.

Aug 28-Sept 6: Organisatie Oude Muziek, Postbus 734, 3500AS Utrecht (010 31 30 340921).

□ **Berlin festival:** This opens with the Staatskapelle Berlin and Heinrich Schiff, and closes with the Berlin Philharmonic and Bernard Haitink. In between are concerts with Claudio Abbado, Daniel Barenboim, Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau and Simon Rattle. Chamber music from the Cherubini Quartet, André Schiff, and recitals of Berio and Boulez.

Aug 30-Sept 27: Berliner Festspiele GmbH, Budapeststr 50, 1000-Berlin 30 (010 49 30 254890).



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SEPTEMBER

□ **Burgenland Haydn festival:** Eisenstadt, Haydn's stately Austrian residence hosts a festival of chamber music and song, starting with an evening with Agnes Balisa and including Masonic music and a *Creation* for children.

September 1-10: Festivalbüro, Schloss Esterhazy, A-7000 Eisenstadt (010 43 26 82618660).

Tours: Martin Randall has a guided tour, visiting Esterhazy, Vienna and Bratislava from Sept 15-21. Page and Moy offers a five-night trip, with excursions, at £840. Tickets and accommodation may also be booked through Habsburg Heritage Cultural Tours.

□ **Linz Brucknerfest:** The festival on the Danube includes the symphonies of the Austrian master, but also emphasises the music of Berio, with all the works quoted in his Sinfonia in a series of performances forming a "Path of Sound".

September 12-October 4: Brucknerhaus, Untere Donaulande 7, A-4020 Linz (010 43 73 2275230).

OCTOBER

□ **Wexford festival opera:** The Republic of Ireland's "Weiss Fjord" comes to life with the eccentric, the recherche, and gallions of Guinness. This year's line-up of rarities is: *The Comedy of Errors* by Stephen Slaughter (contemporary of Mozart), Heinrich Marschner's *Der Vampyr*, and *Il piccolo Marat* by Mascagni.

October 22-November 8: Theatre Royal, High Street, Wexford (010 35 35 322240).

Tours: JMB offers a variety of dates, and an escorted tour at £549. Page and Moy plans a trip. Brompton offers a weekend trip from Oct 29 from £440.

TRAVEL GUIDE

MANY of this year's French spring and summer festivals were not announced in detail as we went to press. However, a comprehensive booklet and listing will be available from the end of March from: Fédération française des festivals internationaux de musique, 2d rue Isenbart, 2500 Besançon (010 33 81 807326).

Here are the British tour operators mentioned in our festival listings.

● **Brompton Travel**, Brompton House, 64 Richmond Road, Kingston-upon-Thames, Surrey KT2 5EH (081-549 3334).

● **Cedek Tours and Holidays**, 17/18 Old Bond Street, London W1X 4RB (071-629 6058).

● **Chamber Music Holidays**, 57 Chatsworth Road, Bourne-mouth, Dorset (0202 528328).

● **Habsburg Heritage Cultural Tours**, 158 Rosendale Road, London SE21 5LG (081-761 0444).

● **Henebery, Karol, Islip, Oxford** (08675 6341).

● **JMB Travel Consultants**, "Rushwick", Worcester WR2 5SN (0905 425628).

● **Page and Moy**, 136-140 London Road, Leicester LE2 1EN (0533 524463).

● **Prospect Music and Art Tours**, 454-458 Chiswick High Road, London W4 5TT (081-995 2151).

● **Martin Randall Travel**, 10 Barley Mow Passage, London W4 (081-994 6477).

● **Travel for the Arts**, 117 Regent's Park Road, London NW1 8UR (071-483 4466).

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TC21/8

Nicole Swengley reports on the new-found popularity of making a return to the classroom

Schools are top of the form

Going back to school is taking on an end-of-term feel now that buying a redundant school house is no longer a question of spending time and energy gutting and renovating the property.

Thanks to the pioneering spirits who snapped up old school houses in the 1970s and 1980s and converted them into unusual homes, a new wave of home owners can move into properties that require, at most, a lick of paint. Yet such houses offer much in the way of historic interest, solid construction, high ceilings and above-average living space.

Stripping out lockers and excavating playgrounds was far from Mark Cresswell's mind when he was house-hunting for a period cottage with character, until he found his school house on the Surrey-Hampshire border.

"To find a house with as much character you would generally have to consider an older building, which would command a higher price," he says. "I knew there would be work to do on the property, but I certainly wasn't looking for a place to renovate totally."

The school house retains many original features, including the old school bell in the roof tower and a working well in the back garden, which now also sports a swimming pool.

The hallway — once the dining hall — has a vaulted, beamed ceiling and a restored brick floor. The living-room has taken over the main classroom with its open fireplace and exposed brick hearth, and three bedrooms have been built into the eaves.

"The conversion has been well thought out by a previous owner," Mr Cresswell says. "As well as being a practical and comfortable house the construction is very solid. Even the surveyors were impressed by its robustness."

Mr Cresswell is reluctantly selling The Old School House after living there for a year. The property

is being sold through Hamptons Haslemere office for £189,500.

Robert Whitelock also recently bought a converted school house in a village near Newmarket, West Suffolk, for £78,000. It had already been divided into two homes; the other part was bought by his daughter, Sandra, bringing the total cost to £125,000.

While Sandra and her husband, Mike, are preparing to gut and renovate their two-storey property, Mr Whitelock and his wife, Daphne, are only too pleased that their one-storey side of the school house has already been converted.

"We love the fact that there is so much space on the ground floor," Mr Whitelock says. "Little has been done to the facade and the original character of the school remains, including the wood-panelled ceiling and the huge, open fireplace. However, the doorway into what was once the school yard is now part of our living-room."

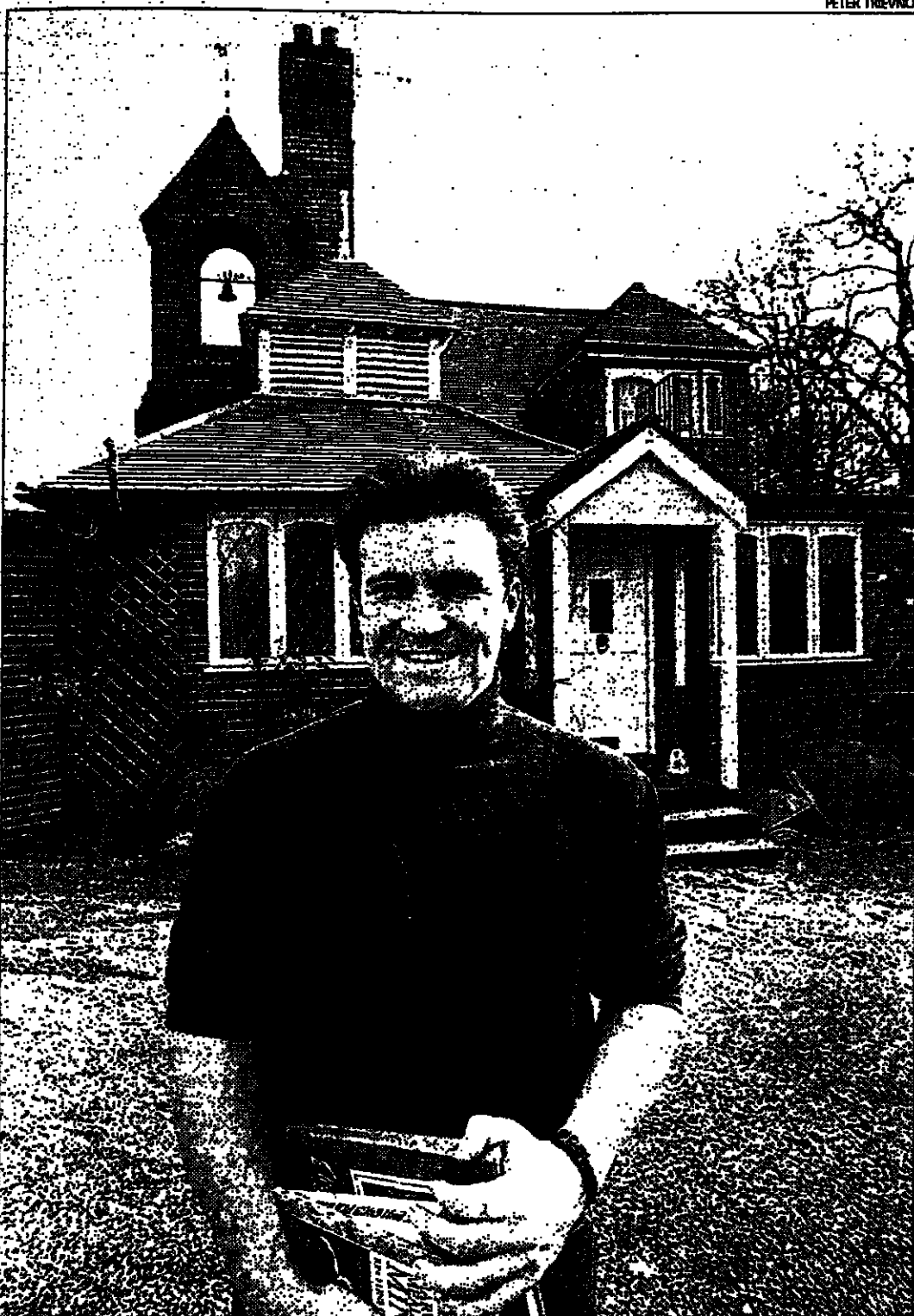
"Two bedrooms and a bathroom had already been added to the side on the ground floor when we bought it and the living-room — the original school room — has a half-floor mezzanine, which we use as a dining area."

Offers of around £200,000 are being invited at John D. Wood's, Oxford branch for The Old School House in the village of Aldsworth, near Oxford. This mid-Victorian nursery school was carefully renovated by farmers Philip and Kit Merson, when they bought it four years ago.

The four-bedroom Cotswold stone house retains the original facade, stained pine floors, the school bell and wrought iron school railings. The 34ft x 19ft living space, once the main classroom, has also been preserved.

"We didn't want to alter the appearance from the outside," Mr Merson says.

"We added a floor and put four bedrooms, a bathroom and en-



By the book: Mark Cresswell bought his old school house for its high ceilings and large rooms

suite bathroom upstairs. Downstairs there is a huge living-room and open-plan dining-room with the original fireplace."

Another converted school house currently on the market is The Old School House at Sherborne, near the Sandringham estate, Norfolk.

Offers are invited in the region of £215,000 by the Newmarket office of Jackson-Stops & Staff.

The three-bedroom house with conservatory, vaulted and beamed ceilings and school bell was converted eight years ago by the present owners, locals who are past

pupils have given the conversion top marks.

Converted school houses make fine homes. The only characteristic thing about them seems to be their name: all the properties mentioned here are called The Old School House.

Romance of a city hideaway

W edged between looming blocks of flats and offices to the rear and the gloomy sweep of a high-rise hotel to the front is a little gothic studio, wrapped in the privacy of its neighbour's garden and protected from prying eyes by a brick wall and a Judas Gate giving on to Lillie Road in west London. Legend has it that the studio was once the resting place for Edward VII and Lillie Langtry and architectural history suggests that it was the studio of Joseph Bickley, plasterer to the royal household. Now it is for sale at £300,000.

From the road you would hardly know it existed: the "gate" is an old timber door above which runs a room of the house next door. It is unremarkable, set back in a corner, among nondescript houses.

The eastern end of Lillie Road was planned by Sir John Lillie in 1826, and originally included the North End Brewery as well as the terrace of houses in which the entrance to the studio is set. Look carefully above the gate and there is an oriel window, and on the facade a coat of arms, said to be the work of Bickley.

Double entrance doors each set with two narrow arched leaded windows lead directly into the main room of the house, the studio itself. To the left is a long gallery kitchen. A brick fireplace is set asymmetrically and at variance with the architectural Victoriana at the end of the studio room. Almost 30 feet square, the studio benefits both from the light of the splendid gothic windows to the front and from a handsome rooflight running the width of the room.

HOUSE HUNTER
The Studio
London SW6

In the right-hand corner of the studio is a sunken area, a few steps down, in the floor of which is the entrance to a cellar with six feet of headroom. By removing the floor and judiciously juggling the stairs, a further room could be created of double height, albeit windowless. Above, a set of stairs with turned balusters lead to a minstrel's gallery currently used as an open-plan bedroom.

Further stairs lead up to a bathroom, a sauna room and access to a roof terrace, 30ft long and almost 20ft wide, well screened and overlooking the garden. What the building offers for £300,000 is charm with versatility. Ideal as a studio with living accommodation it could easily become living accommodation with a studio. The entire ground floor, with the hidden attractions of its sunken area and cellar, would make a novel office. One might pinch a bit off the roof terrace and combine it with the sauna room to build a bedroom.

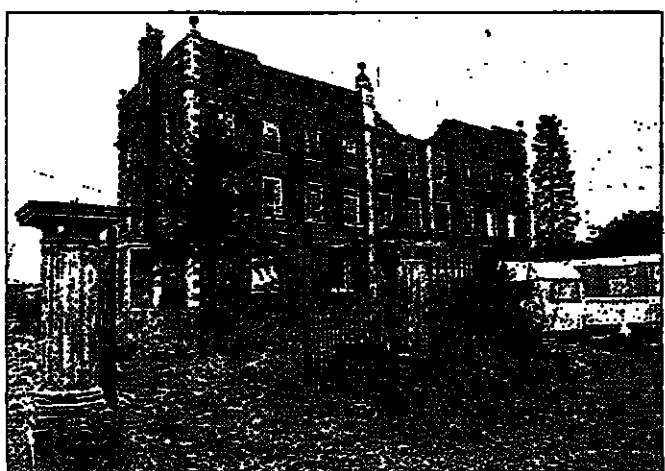
ELUNED PRICE

● The Studio, 62A Lillie Road, London SW6 is for sale through Knight Frank & Rutley, 67 Kensington Church St, London W8.



Gothic appeal: charming facade of a versatile £300,000 studio

Heap of the week: Hankelow Hall



Caravanserai: owner Kirk Shenton is still waiting for finance

Wreck wrapped up in red tape

You can usually tell the site of a country house by the tall trees around and behind it. Not so Hankelow Hall, in Cheshire, which stands amid open fields and is approached along a twin-tracked concrete drive.

Here is a wonderfully quirky example of English provincial baroque, the style so ruthlessly exterminated by Lord Burlington and his fellow Palladians from the 1720s onwards. All the effort at Hankelow went into creating a grand main front. The house is tall and narrow and capped by an eccentrically high parapet. Over the centre are the remains of a strange, blind arch.

Its derelict state has not prevented Hankelow's owner, Kirk Shenton, from making his home there, in a neat array of caravans and huts on the gravel in front of the entrance.

Mr Shenton runs a small building company and is seeking restoration finance from Crewe and Nantwich district council. He has drawn up plans for a new and clock tower behind the house, but the application has been delayed because of a disagreement about the amount of development needed to generate the necessary funds.

Unusually for a country house, the entrance porch is flanked by iron railings. Enter the front door and a surprise awaits: a huge pit like a tank trap opens before you, but on the other side, if you could reach it, are the remains of an elaborate Victorian tiled floor.

The ceilings have gone, but,

surprisingly, many of the thick-glazed, early 18th-century window sashes survive — a tribute to English hardwood, even when it is left unpainted. The remains of a series of garden walls survive behind the house and could be rebuilt to create a new walled garden.

Intriguingly, the village of Hankelow has a series of handsome houses which you pass on the way to the hall, each like a small manor and well looked after.

Hankelow Hall's history is obscure. William Baker, an architect and surveyor who lived at nearby Audlem, made alterations, including a dining-room, for a Mr Wettinshall in 1755-57. It was presumably then or slightly later that the Ionic porch was added and the ground-floor windows changed.

Ironically, Hankelow had taken on a new lease of life as flats when the council served a closing order on the property. One cannot help thinking that a few improvement grants then might have been a more economic solution.

Mr Shenton was full of plans for new woodland and a conservation park, but is now in despair. His hopes rest on English Heritage, whose officers recently visited the property. "My wife and I are on sleeping pills. I've been restoring old properties for 20 years, but now our plans are completely stuck," he says.

MARCUS BINNEY

● For further information, ring Mr Shenton on 0270 812200.

Final curtain call for the jet-set maestro

me & my
designer

Conductor Jan
Latham-Koenig
talks about his
Hampstead home

The flamboyant, London-born conductor, Jan Latham-Koenig, who is in London this week for a concert at the Festival Hall, bought his five-storey Georgian house in the middle of Hampstead, northwest London, last year. Tall and narrow, it stands in a street of listed buildings and eminent performers.

Mr Latham-Koenig, aged 38, is the permanent guest conductor with the Vienna State Opera. He is rarely in London, but he knew exactly what he wanted for the house, which he bought on the advice of his cousin Edouard Koenig, who is an architect.

Mr Koenig, who specialises in restoring and refurbishing listed buildings, says: "Sometimes you



Tuned in trio: Jan Latham-Koenig, centre, with designer Melanie Paine and cousin Edouard Koenig

just feel good in a house and that was exactly the sense here."

Together they have transformed the five-bedroom family house into an elegant home for a single man, creating a drawing-room, dining-room, an intimate study, music room, a bleached white breakfast room, and one floor given over to a large bedroom, mirrored bathroom and gym.

To design the interior, Mr

Latham-Koenig hired Melanie Paine, whose forte is fabrics, colour and specialist window treatments.

"What he wanted was something elegant and theatrical without being at all wild or vulgar," Ms Paine says.

"I really didn't like the yellow in the hall," he says of the brilliant Medean yellow used above the dado rail.

"But Melanie and Edouard per-

suaded me it was important to make the entrance as light and cheerful as possible. I have come to agree with them."

The front door opens on to the hall, at the end of which is the most theatrical room in the house, the drama-filled dining-room, dominated and adorned by a burnished, 12-branch chandelier, and draped in deep red silk. The colour scheme is rich ruby red and dark sage

green, and the new, stained ash floor is decorated with a strong tawny red and grey diamond pattern to give a three-dimensional effect.

Here Mr Latham-Koenig entertains business associates and soloists, visiting musicians and friends. The oval table, from 1740, seats eight comfortably. Around it are eight vibrantly patterned chairs designed by Ms Paine, using a green and gold tapestry border fabric and red velvet upholstery.

A lucky and quirky feature of the house is that the space for a dumb waiter between the basement and ground floor still exists. Mr Koenig has installed the contemporary equivalent — an electric lift, much used by Mr Latham-Koenig's party caterers.

His music room on the first floor was a bathroom, but now has had the cornicing, dado rails, fireplace and skirting restored and the floor reinforced to take his baby grand piano. Here he rehearses with soloists before heading for the concert hall.

Ms Paine has covered the walls in brown wrapping paper above the dado rail. "It has a simplicity and a subtle texture," she says. "It is also practical and neutral." Below she has used a rich red and ivory print, picking up the red and ivory in the thick curtains at the double casement windows.

In many cases the inspiration for the rooms and the design has come from the paintings and drawings Mr Latham-Koenig collects. He sold all his furniture when he bought this house so he could start anew, but the pictures are his passion.

The modernist, green marble bathroom has two telephones but is the only room in the house without its own micro hi-fi system. These tiny devices provide music separately in each room of the house, from a huge stack of CDs. In the romantic, blue and white bedroom, the system can be operated by remote control from the bed — a cherrywood four-poster draped in soft white linen.

Inevitably much of Mr Latham-Koenig's travelling life is spent in hotel rooms or airport lounges. When he is at home in London he wants comfort and luxury. That helps explain why his favourite aspect of the finished house is the opulence of the curtains, which overflow on to the floor.

"What I love is the lavishness of the length," Mr Latham-Koenig says. "If you can see the end of curtains, it always looks as if someone's come along in a spirit of meanness and cut them off."

KAY MARLES

● Clarke Kidwell Koenig Architects, 28 Museum Street, WC1 (071-631 1183); Paine & Co, 49-51 Barnsbury Street, N1 (071-607 1176).

Pyrenean playground on the cheap

The Pyrenees, wet and fertile in the west, rocky and snowy in the middle and dry and sunny in the east, are beautiful, varied and far less developed than the Alps. Property prices are also a lot lower.

Not far from Tarbes in the Hautes Pyrénées, on the edge of the tiny village of Buggard, this delightful family house (right) is for sale at £29,500. In half an acre of gardens with fruit trees, it enjoys views of the Pic du Midi; the ski slopes of La Mongie are 45 minutes' drive away.

The old stone house, although still in need of a coat of paint, has been restored and is ready to move into. It has a large kitchen and a living-room with open fireplace on the ground floor; three bedrooms, bathroom and lavatory upstairs, plus a small room suitable for conversion to a second bathroom. There is also a garage, convertible loft, separate two-roomed cottage, barns and outbuildings suitable for conversion.

The UK agent is Sifex, Phoenix House, 86 Fulham High Street, London SW6 (071-384 1200).

The Basque coast of the Pyrénées-Atlantiques is lovely, but not

without its share of concrete and crowded beaches. Biarritz, once the epitome of style for the English aristocrat wintering abroad, with its grand hotels and casinos, is still the most fashionable of the Basque resorts, and the most expensive. A one-bedroom sea-

front flat here will cost at least £80,000.

The most attractive property buys are to be found in the northern foothills around Pau, the capital of ancient Bearn. At the edge of the Parc National des Pyrénées, the area is popular for holiday and retirement



Mountain views: this restored village house is for sale at £29,500

homes and prices are rising. However there is plenty of property around for under £50,000.

The typical Bearnaise house is stone built under a steeply pitched slate roof, with edges that curve up to keep the rain and snow away from the walls. Prices start at £20,000 for a small, rundown cottage on half an acre. For about £28,000 you can buy a restored village house, complete with exposed oak beams and open stone fireplaces, with three or four bedrooms, kitchen and bathroom.

Large unrestored farmhouses, with barns, stables and a good chunk of pastureland, cost from £40,000. A habitable four-bedroom farmhouse for £55,000 near Pau has several outbuildings suitable for gites conversion, seven acres of pastureland and mountain views. (La Collection Française, 66 High Street, Manton, Marlborough, Wiltshire, 0672 516266.)

The same agent is asking £56,000 for a renovated 16th-century watermill near Orthez with three bedrooms, beamed ceilings, exposed stone walls and two acres of riverfront.

CHERYL TAYLOR

CHANNEL 4

- 6.00 **The Wonderful Wizard of Oz.** Cartoon adventures with Dorothy and friends (41:44:59) 6.25 **Dr Struggles** (890234) 6.35 **Once Upon A Time...** (Lila) The film (862266) 7.25 **In Conversation With...** Lily Cooper (435932) 7.55 **Transa World Sport.** International sports highlights (890285) features (801028) 8.00 **Nears** (131433) 8.15 **Racing: The Morning Line** 8.60 **Nears**
- 9.30 **Eurovision in the Tyne.** A prelude to *Disabling World* which starts tomorrow. Rachel Sealock looks at the state of television for deaf people (61824)
- 10.00 **Our Olympics.** Highlights of the 1990 Special Olympics from Glasgow (1) (71247)
- 11.30 **Fire: Great Gums** (b/w, 1941). Vintage Laurel and Hardy comedy in which they reduce an army training camp in Texas to chaos. Directed by Monty Banks (9238265)
- 11.50 **Gustav Looks for a Job.** Animation from Hungary (5434868)
- 12.00 **Get Smart.** Spy spoof starring Don Adams (50838)
- 12.30 **The Beverly Hillsbillies** (b/w). Vintage comedy series about a naive oil-rich family from the deep south of America (62112)
- 1.00 **Fine: Plittiff** (b/w, 1954) starring Judy Holliday and Jack Lemmon. A young couple decide to divorce, only to find that the single life is not as wonderful as they had hoped. Directed by Mark Robson (9411063)
- 2.35 **Sense of Responsibility.** A tongue-in-cheek cartoon made to promote pit safety (769711)
- 4.25 **Channel 4 Racing from Doncaster** introduced by Brough Scott. Live coverage of **Tottley Bitter Doncaster Mile** (3.00); the **William Hill Lincoln Handicap** (3.40); the **Cambridge Trophy** (4.15); and the **Insurex Expo - Sure Group Handicap** Open (4.45) (87467353)
- 5.00 **Brookside.** Omnibus edition. (Teletext) (a) (r) (2379975)
- 6.30 **Night to Reply.** Claire Rayner reflects on criticism of her starring in a sanitary protection advertisement. Presented by Sheena McDonald. (Teletext) (a) (773)
- 7.00 **A Week in Politics.** Vincent Hanna and Andrew Rawnsley review the first full week of the campaign; plus a look back at the political career of Michael Foot (6112)
- 8.00 to 11.25 **Tv Heaven.** Frank Muir presents another evening of classic television, this week from the year 1970 (805247)



American POWs Annabeth Gish and Gena Rowlands (9.05pm)

- 9.05** **Guests of the Emperor**, It is 1962, Singapore falls to the Japanese and a cast of international actresses are brought up and put behind barbed wire. Gena Rowlands and Annabeth Gish lead for the United States. Chloë Webb plays an Aussie called Dink! Dink and the Brits are represented by Judy Pfratt, Cherie Lunger and that nice Phyllis Logan from *Lovely Joe*. Their fate is to be shouted at, struck, kicked and humiliated and generally treated badly by stereotypically thuggish Japs. We have been here before. *Guests of the Emperor* is most likely a remake of the BBC series *Tenko*, except that while the Boob had to make do with Dorset as a location this production was filmed in New Orleans. There is another difference, *Tenko* managed a degree of characterisation, *Guests of the Emperor* is strictly one note.
- 10.05** **Alice and Company**, Michael Aspel talks to actor Warren Beatty (BB6824)
- 10.55** **Metro** presented by Ian Dury. There is a behind-the-scenes look at preparations of English National Opera's new production of Verdi's *Don Carlos* at London's Coliseum Theatre (B28112)
- 11.00** **The Hour of Victory**, Drama about a group of soldiers during the Vietnam war (BB302) 12-12-76 NEW TV (BB302)
- 1.30** **Night Train**, The latest news from the pop music scene (A51776)
- 2.35** **Bhangra Beat** featuring XLNC and Nipin Sawhney (BB23836)
- 3.00** **American College Football**, Action from the Fiesta Bowl (G0332)
- 4.00** **Cosch**, Comedy from America (T3903)
- 5.00** **The Hit Men and Her**, Peter Waterman and Michaels Strachen with the latest sounds on the pop music scene (A) (T7392)
- 5.30** **ITN News**, 12-12-76 (BB302)

8.05 On the Busse starring Reg Varney as the cheeky bus driver and Bob Grant as his partner, Jack. In this episode new technology means he unveils a heated car in the form of a two-way radio control. With Stephen Lewis. (Teletext) (556824)

8.55 The Tribe that Hides from Milan. Adrian Cowell's remarkable film following the two-year expedition to find and protect the elusive Kreen-Akroon, an Amazonian tribe whose way of life has remained in the Stone Age. (Teletext) (8147150)

10.20 Memento: Infant To Steel. In this episode of the fast-paced drama about a person with no memory of the past, Francis there is a daring undercover attack on a German armament factory. Starring Peter Barkworth and George Sewell. (8159247)

11.25 Court TV: America On Trial. Ohio v Banks. A college basketball star is charged with rape and sexual assault. (346518)

12.25am Film: The Big Shot (b/w, 1942) starring Humphrey Bogart as a loser who fails to go straight and joins a gang led by a crooked cop. Directed by Michael Curtiz. (8159247)

1.55 The World: End of the Series (b/w, 9/11/1999). Ends at 2.05

(1507957)
Cruising

ANGLO
As London, except: 11:30am-12:00 The Murenses Today (3934) 1.55 The T-Boyz (3985/7) 2.20 Carbon Time (7300/5) 3.05-4:45 Film: Carry on Zulu (3955/12) 5.05 Anglo News (3947/35) (6:55-11:25 Carbon Time (3985/7) 11:30-1:00 The Zoo (3951) 12

BORDER
As London, except: 1:30pm European Golf (3945) Out of the Loop (3994/2) 4.05 Film: Women of the South (3987/7) 5.05 Border News (3934) 5:15-5:25 Anglo Border News (3935/7) 10:50 News (3926/2) 11:50 Border One (3936) 11:55 Alfred Hitchcock's Presents (3917/20) 2.00 The Hit Man and Her (12349) 4.00 Videolotion (7303) 4.30 Pacific Spontown (7300) 4.50 Stephen King's...This Is Horror (2413/39)

CENTRAL
As London, except: 11:30am-12:00 The

WCN Pro Wrestling (44732) 4.45-5:15 Central Jeddah '92 (397/202)

GRANADA
As London, except: 11:30am-12:00 Clon's Ireland (3934) 1.55 Guinness Reel (3945/49) 2.50 Reel (3945/49) 3.45-4:45 Film: Women of the South (3987/7) 5.05 Granada News (3985/50) 5.10-5:25 Granada GOLF Extra (3975/10) 10:25 Midsommer Night's Dream (3951) 11:30-1:35 Alfred Hitchcock's Presents (3917/20) 2.00 The Hit Man and Her (12349) 4.00 Videolotion (7303) 4.30 Pacific Spontown (7300) 4.50 Stephen King's...This Is Horror (2413/39)

HTV WEST
As London, except: 11:30am-12:00 Soccer News (3934) 1.55 Soccer in the 70's (3985/7) 2.25 World Tenthon Champion ships (3945) 3.05-4:00 Euro Return to the Sea (3951) 10:27-11:00 West News (7303/38) 10:55-11:30 Jon Goss

[illegible]

7.05AM Weather: News Headlines
7.00 Morning Calendar (cont):
 Sonnets in C, Op 1 No 7; Bach
 (English Suite No 1 in A, BWV
 812)

7.30 News
7.35 Morning Calendar (cont):
 Dvorák (The Wood Demon);
 Brahms (Der Gang zum
 Liebesohn, Op 31 No 5).
 7.40 The Shortest Programme
 in C minor, D 703; Beethoven

8.00 Beethoven (Symphony No 9
 in D minor, Op 92)
4.00 Turning Up: The composer is
 described later to Chris de
 Souza, Desmond (Barnish
 'Gink'), Javier Alvarez
 (According to Differences:
 John Welch, harp; Debra
 (Family Sounds?); Trevor
 Wright (Anne's Magic Garden)

5.00 The Shortest Programme
 in C minor, D 703; Beethoven
 (Symphony No 9 in D minor,
 Op 92)

RADIO 4

| | |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| (a) Stereo on FM | 5.00 PM 5.50 Shipping Forecast |
| 5.55am Shipping Forecast 5.00 | 5.55 Weather |
| News Briefing, Incl 6.03 | 6.00 News and Sports Round-Up |
| Weather 6.10 The Farming | 6.25 Week Ending: A satirical |
| Weather Incl 6.30, 7.00, 7.30, | review of the week's news. |
| 8.00, 8.30 News 6.50 Prayer | With Sally Groom, David Tate, |
| for the Day 6.55, 7.55 | Alastair McGowan and Ben |
| Weather 7.00 Today 7.20 | Adams (a) (g) |
| Listeners' Letters 7.25, 8.25 | 6.50 Show the Week, with Robert |
| Sports News 7.48 Thought for | Robinson (s) |
| the Day 8.58 Weather | 7.20 Telescope: Looking for |
| 9.00 News | Starburst |

8.35 English and Italian Baroque Music by William Lawes, Peiham Humphrey and Purcell, 5.45 Third Opinion, with Christopher Cook. Includes reviews of Heartbreak House, and the Expressionist Face exhibition at Manchester City

9.30 **Breakaway:** Ken Bruce with travel and holiday news

10.00 **News: Loose Ends:** Conversation with Ned Sherrin

● **CHOICE:** Paradoxically, Louisa Buck's speeded-up odyssey through Rembrandt's life is strengthened, not weakened, by aiming to be all

Monteverdi, Salomons Rossi and Mazzochi. Tragicomedia under Stephen Stubbs, chitarrone and archlute, with Suzie LeBlanc, soprano, Ian Hunt, alto, Flaminio Piccoli, Art Gallery

6.30 Live from the Met
Metropolitan Opera Chorus and Orchestra under James Levine perform Act 1 of *Madama Butterfly*

11.00 News: The Politics of Choice, with Robin Lustig
11.30 Europhilie, presented by Gordon Clough
12.00 News: Europe, Russia and the World

9.30 Saturday Review: Record Review - Building a Library. Beethoven's last piano sonata, Op. 111, by Stephen Prineas; Mozart's four-act opera, *The Marriage of Figaro*, with Patricia Schulman, soprano, and Countess Almaviva; Dawn Upshaw, soprano, as *Sweeney*; and *Exoticism* by

12.25pm The News Quiz: Barry Took quizzes team captains Richard Ingrams and Alan Coren and guests (p. 12.55)

discs of English Renaissance secular music. 10.40 Record Release. Schubert (Symphony No 4, Tragic: English Sinfonia under Charles Groves). Modern

2.00 News; Costing the Earth:
Robin Page reports on
evolution of the

(Pieces performed by The Musicians of Swanee Alley and Red Syrd); Chopin (12 Etudes, Op 25; Vladimir

7.50 Classic Serial: Buddenbrooks
— The Decline of a Family. The sixth and final part of John Peacock's adaptation of Thomas Mann's novel.

Ashtakrasy, piano); John Jenkins (Music for viol consort: *Hesperion XX under Jordi Savall*); Nielson (Symphony No 2, Four Temperaments: Royal

2.30 Saturday Playhouse: The Wench Is Dead. Inspector Morse comes to radio, played by John Shrapnel, to investigate a century-old crime

12.55pm Words: Alistair Beaton looks at language and its usage

from his hospital bed. With Robert Glenister as Sergeant Lewis, Colin Dexter's 1989 Gold Dagger winner for best crime novel of the year has

1.05 Piano Trios: Peter Frankl, piano, Gyorgy Pauk, violin, Ralph Kirshbaum, cello, perform Beethoven (Allegretto

Stephen Oliver (s) 9.59
Weather
10.00 The World Tonight (s)
10.30 Open Mind: Peter Riddell
chairs a discussion on the

in B flat, WoO 39). Copland (*Vitebsk*, Study on a Jewish theme); Dvorák (*Trio* in E minor, Op 90, *Dumky*) (r)

11.00 **Richard Baker Compares**
Notes with double-bass
players Chi-Chi Nwanoku and
Rodney Stanger.

programmes tracing the career of the Czech conductor. Bavarian Radio Chorus, with Helen Donath,

4.30 Science Now: Alun Lewis visits an exhibition that celebrates the first river tunnel at Rotherhithe, and there is a

soprano, Brigitte Fassbaender, 11.00 BBC SO under Andrew Davis
contralto, Horst Laubenthal, performs Tippett (*Suite*, New
tenor, Hans Sotin, bass, Year); Hugh Wood (*Cello*
performs Haydn (*Prelude, The Concerto*, Op 12: Timothy
Creation); Mozart (*Symphony Hugh*) (r)

report on a new method of
protecting York Minister's
stained glass from the
ravages of time and weather

COMPILED BY SUSAN THOMSON AND GILLIAN MAXEY
TV CHOICE PETER WAYMARK/RADIO CHOICE PETER DAVALLE

FREQUENCIES: Radio 1: 1053kHz/285m; 1089kHz/275m; FM 97.6-99.8. Radio 2: FM 88-90.2. Radio 3: FM 80.2-92.4. Radio 4: 159kHz/1515m; FM 82.4-84.6. Radio 5: 693kHz/433m; 808kHz/390m. LBC: 1152kHz/261m; FM 97.3. Capital: 1548kHz/194m; FM 85.8. GLR: 1458kHz/206m; FM 94.5. World Service: MW 649kHz/465m.

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